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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

THE ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL IN THE ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE OF THE PRIVATE SCHOOL

BY
JOHN AUSTEN GRAHAM LILLY

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A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE
FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION

EDMONTON, ALBERTA
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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommended to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled "The Role of the Principal in the Organizational Culture of the Private School" submitted by John Austen Graham Lilly in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education.

Frank Peters

Dr. F. Peters (supervisor)

Linda LaRocque

Dr. L. J. LaRocque

John Ellis

Dr. J. L. Ellis

Dated October 3rd, 1994.

This work is dedicated to

Allan Greenlees, who made it all possible.

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to shed more light on the part the private school principal plays in the culture of that organization. The decision was made to focus on denominational private schools and a Catholic school was chosen. The study may be of value to researchers investigating Catholic schools, private schools, the role of the principal, and the concept of organizational culture. The second chapter in this inquiry explores some of the related literature in these areas.

Having obtained the necessary permission, I shadowed the principal of St. David's School, Allan Greenlees, for a term, took copious notes, and reflected on the scenes I observed. Besides observation, data collection involved interviews with Allan and these were held on a regular basis throughout the term. To obtain crossreferences I interviewed one of the administrative assistants and a number of the teaching faculty. I also distributed open-ended questions to a group of students and examined many official school documents.

I examined the assembled data and organized my findings around Allan's dealings with the various constituencies of the school; namely, the administrative staff, the students, the teachers, the board, the parents, and the wider community. Then I looked at the way he developed and strengthened relationships with these groups, worked to join the groups together, and acted to shore up relationships when they came under great strain.

In my reflections I started by comparing Allan's efforts to bind the school groups together with those of principals in other denominational private schools studied. Next I contemplated Allan's specific attempts to join the groups together and the way in which he tried to reduce the escalating tension of the term's last weeks. Deliberations followed on Allan's careful, calm, and measured leadership and the potential lessons for other administrators. My inquiry ended with some philosophic and practical suggestions for educational administration courses and some recommendations for future research.

Acknowledgements

A study like this needs the cooperative and willing efforts of many people to bring it to fruition and for their able and selfless assistance I am deeply indebted.

Firstly, I would like to thank all the professors who taught and inspired me during my years at the Universities of Alberta and Victoria. My special thanks must go to Dr. F. Peters, my supervisor, for his many words of encouragement and counsel by mail and by telephone.

Secondly, my appreciation is extended to everyone associated with St. David's School. It was a busy and stressful time for many people and I am sure that being there, observing their actions, and asking them questions cannot have been easy for them, especially towards the end of term. Nevertheless they were extremely cooperative; giving up their valuable time for my inquiry and accepting my presence in the school. My special thanks must go to the staff, administrative assistant, and students who were interviewed and surveyed more formally. As a result of the time that they sacrificed, the thoughts they offered, and their openness and honesty I was able to gather some very valuable data.

Thirdly, the contribution of my friends and family must be acknowledged. Without their support and patience this thesis would not have been possible. Deborah Marshall looked after my children during the school holidays and when she could not, then my wife's parents, Tom and Mavis Smales were happy to step in. My own parents, John and Betty Lilly, willingly helped while on holiday with us and my children, David, Michael, and Matthew, showed resilience and forbearance when their father told them once again that he had to study. My wife, Liz, deserves special thanks here for her suggestions, encouragement, and tolerance. She would always check how much time I wanted to finish a certain section before making plans and put up with my very untidy desk and file.

Finally, I owe Allan Greenlees a huge debt of gratitude. As I said in the dedication this study just would not have been possible without him. He welcomed me into the school warmly, helped me in every way possible, and made the data collection a memorable and enjoyable experience. In some ways I wish I could reveal his

real name for he is a calm, generous, and tolerant Christian man who was an ideal participant.

For everyone I mentioned above and for others whom I have inadvertently missed, I remain deeply grateful.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Sometimes during assemblies at the Scottish private school I attended my gaze would turn to a particular brown wall panel. On it was a list of the school's previous headmasters complete with the date of their administration and underneath was an inscription which stated "Let us Remember our Headmasters." To the accompaniment of administrative pronoucements in those assemblies I often wondered why previous headmasters should be remembered, what they should be remembered for, and what they were like. Away from those assemblies many intense peer group sessions took place about the directives of our own headmaster and how they affected our life at school. In this way the rules, traditions, expectations, values, and meaning were subjected to our critical analysis.

Since those days I have been able to reflect on these questions about headmasters and principals. As a private school teacher in New Zealand and Britain I, like so many staff members, was concerned about the administration of the respective headmasters and its impact on teacher morale and school spirit. Administrative action or inaction was carefully scrutinized and routinely debated with historical anecdotes provided as reinforcement or contrast. From this exercise we obtained a sense of what we were doing and where we were going.

Reading works of literary fiction like "Tom Brown's Schooldays" (Hughes, date unknown), "Goodbye Mr. Chips" (Hilton, 1934), and "To Serve Them All My Days" (Delderfield, 1972) has also affected my perspective. These books present a rich and idealistic cultural portrait. Schooling is depicted as a vocation, the influence of the headmaster on various school constituencies is profound and usually benevolent, and expectations, attitudes, and philosophies are almost tangible. Although these books represent historical fiction I feel that their portrayal of private schools cannot be dismissed out of hand for they contain keen cultural insights.

More recently graduate studies at the University of Alberta

added a theoretical structure to my practical insights and my leisure time musings. Seminar discussions, workshops, presentations, and background reading helped me to blend theories of administration with my knowledge of the practices of headmasters who I had been associated with. As a result of this I was able to take a step back and view administration in a more detached way. With this my perspective changed as I could see and examine more of the administrative web and could feel a certain empathy for administrators.

NATURE OF THE STUDY

My interest in private schooling and in the administration of these schools has not diminished over time and determined the general area of my research. With guidance in qualitative methods for which I had an intellectual predisposition I began to focus my thoughts on a detailed interpretive study of a particular private school administrator. An interpretation of the principal's role in the organizational culture of a private school seemed to focus the questions that I had been asking for years. Researchers, like Wolcott (1973), Blumberg and Greenfield (1986), and Moylan (1988), have carried out similar studies in public sector schools and others, like Maslen (1982) and Lightfoot (1983) have included portraits of public and private school administrators in their work. However, I feel that there was and is room for a specific study of this kind on a private school principal or headmaster.

With a clearer picture of the research topic in mind my thoughts then turned to the type of private school to be scrutinized. Canada has a broad spectrum of private schools (Bergen, 1989; Peters, 1987) which range from the elite or independent schools, to the schools based on the thought of Steiner and Montessori, to those which adhere to a particular faith, and to those which promote the language and heritage of a certain cultural group (Bezeau, 1989).

My own experience and educational background has come largely from the independent sector and I decided to broaden my knowledge of the private school mosaic. The religious element of schooling has always interested me and, having read the fascinating accounts of fundamentalist schools by Peshkin (1986)

and Rose (1988), I considered them for my study. However, Owens (1987) has written that "qualitative inquiry seeks to understand human behaviour and human experience from the actor's own frame of reference, not from [that] of the investigator" (p.181). Although the sessions with two principals of fundamentalist schools were intriguing and illuminating I examined my conscience and determined that my worries about some of the tenets of Christian fundamentalism could jeopardise my report. Therefore I decided not to pursue that line of inquiry.

Ultimately, my decision to focus on the principal of a private Catholic school was a balance of ethical and practical reasons. I had few strong emotions or preconceived ideas about Catholic education, a school was within easy reach of my home, and gaining access could be easier because of a contact I had.

ASSUMPTIONS AND BIASES

Into this study I took with me my own cultural baggage. This baggage can probably be easily identified by the reader but my assumptions and biases should be clearly stated. They involve the necessity of having private schools and the strong influence of headmasters or principals in these institutions.

Canada is seen by many observers as a good example of a pluralist society and Peshkin (1986) argued that in a society of this type sanctions against private Christian fundamentalist schools would be sheer hypocrisy. Pluralism allows for the exercise of choice and Bezeau (1989) found that the principle of choice in schooling was enshrined in the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights which was signed by Canada. Since private schools are philosophically distinct from public schools (Peshkin, 1986; Peters, 1987) they provide a choice for society which eases the pressure on the public system to be all things to all people. Furthermore some people have the perception that standards in public schools have declined and so the existence of private schools has allowed them to exercise choice (Peters, 1985).

Another argument in support of private schools relates to the problems associated with a monopoly in the provision of schooling (Bezeau, 1989). State sponsored education may lead to

inefficiency, inflexibility, and a disregard for the public interest. Manly-Casimir (1982) and Bergen (1989) saw competition between the private and public sectors as being positive. It could make public schools more responsive to the parents and the community and keener to search for improvements.

More specific to denominational private schools it is my fear that a soullessness is creeping into our educational system. Hodgkinson's (1991) contention was that education is special as it addresses a spectrum of values from security and health to philosophy and religion (p. 26/7). However, both Hodgkinson (1983) and Bloom (1987) have expressed concern that the higher values like philosophy and religion are being left to drift in educational organizations. Bloom (1987) referred to it as "spiritual entropy" (p. 51) and Hodgkinson (1983) wrote about the leaching away of meaning (p.16). Schumacher (1974) also participated in this lament and stressed that the educational reaction should be "one of metaphysical reconstruction" (p. 83).

While I do not agree that denominational private schools have all the answers to this malaise I do feel that they are at least attempting to raise student consciousness. As such they have valuable lessons and experiences to lay before other private and public sector schools.

My second assumption revolves around my own experiences of headmasters or principals in the private system and my opinion is that they have played pivotal roles in the life of the schools they have served. Their pronouncements, implications, and silence have been felt in formal and informal conversations, assemblies, services, and faculty meetings. This experiential feeling has support in the literature concerning the public school system. Sarason (1971) regarded the principal as "central to the activities of a school" (p. 110). Blumberg and Greenfield (1986) wrote that principals do make a difference for "the tone of the school . . . seems to be heavily influenced by the attitude and behaviour of whoever sits in the principal's office" (p. 223). Finally, Burgess (1983) who studied a Catholic comprehensive school in Britain described the way the founding headmaster felt that he should be "the main participant in the school . . . [as] being the headmaster meant taking the lead" (p. 29).

LIMITATIONS AND DELIMITATIONS

As well as referring to my assumptions and biases this introduction should also address the limitations of this study. My role as a researcher could be seen photographically as the research is a snap shot in time. Coleman and LaRocque (1989) described the difficulties of this situation as an attempt "to capture and hold for examination a reality which even as we spoke with our respondents was changing in ways which we nor they could neither know or easily recapture later" (p. 196).

Also the photographer's presence and behaviour may well affect people even though they may be willing participants. Efforts to coax that natural smile may end with something forced. The participant, although willing, may be nervous or preoccupied. So, in the research process LeCompte and Goertz (1982) have pointed out that "the possible and probable effects of the observer's presence must be considered" (p. 46). Argyris (1952) went so far as to state that informants may behave differently to reveal themselves in a favourable light.

The same photographer may use a particular lens or filter or may only have displayed a few of the numerous pictures taken. This is also a problem in qualitative research as the writer has to think about the data before proceeding (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982). It may indeed be mountainous (Hammersly, 1984) and so what to include and what to leave out becomes a headache (King, 1984).

There are also limits that I have placed upon this study which concern the personnel and school involved. The research is aimed at one principal and one type of private school and can rightly be regarded as a narrow but detailed inquiry. I restricted my activities to the field of school business only as I felt that prolonged and immediate exposure could suffocate any relationship in its infancy and the principal was entitled to some privacy. I also put a time limit of one term in the field so that I did not outstay my welcome and was not tempted to stay until I got the ideal anecdote or choicest saying.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study does have its limitations and delimitations but I feel that it does have some modest theoretical and practical significance. First of all the private school system in Canada certainly merits closer scrutiny. Peters (1987) demonstrated that there has been a steady overall growth in the numbers attending private schools. While numbers receiving private schooling are small by comparison to those obtaining public schooling there is increasing public awareness that there are alternatives. With this comes implications for researchers to provide a better understanding of these alternatives to help people make informed decisions about them. This task assumes more importance when one considers that the traditional view of and debate about private schools has crystallized around impressions of elite private schools (Bezeau, 1989).

One advantage of natural setting research is that "emphasis is placed on careful, in-depth descriptions leading to the development of hypotheses worthy of testing using alternate design strategies" (Jackson, 1988, p. 19/20). It is therefore my hope that this study will prove to be a useful addition to the body of knowledge about private schools and can provide a stepping stone for other researchers.

Bogdan and Biklen (1982) noted that educators are interested in the way that research findings can be applied to educational settings. I like to think that this report will augment educators' insight and give them some opportunity for reflection. Certainly Allan Greenlees, the principal who suffered my presence for a term, expressed a keen interest in my findings and looked forward to reading this study. I believe that he will find my interpretation to be of practical value although I feel this is a scant offering in return for the very real privilege of observing him at work and questioning many of his actions.

Finally, I feel that this research has enabled me to experience something of the nature of private school principalship without having to live with the responsibilities and stresses of that vocation. Like Willower (1984) I found that the task of the principal is complicated, demanding, and fraught with difficulties and yet I can see why he wrote that principals view the challenge

in a positive way. In addition I was fortunate to be in a position to learn more about the cultural forces at work within one school. I am confident that the opportunities afforded by my research will enable me to become a more thoughtful and sensitive educator.

ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS

Altogether this thesis has five chapters. In the second I review three main strands of research involved in the topic. These are the concept of organizational culture, the organizational culture of denominational private schools, and the role of the principal in these schools. In chapter three I focus on the methodology of the study. Here I include a description of how I gained access, how I collected the data, and then how I analysed those data. In the fourth chapter I present my interpretation of Allan Greenlees' role at St. David's in six sections. These sections represent the six school constituencies: the administrative team, the students, the teachers, the board, the parents, and the community at large. In it I concentrate on the role of the principal in weaving those links and relationships together to give them strength and meaning. I also consider the efforts of the principal to join groups together and prevent the school's web from being torn apart. Finally, in chapter five I provide a reflection on my findings, examine Allan's leadership style, and make some suggestions about courses and research in educational administration.

Chapter 2

TYING THE LITERATURE TOGETHER

The title of this thesis, "The Role of the Principal in the Organizational Culture of the Private School," is like a plate laden with spaghetti and something needs to be done to aid its digestion! The concepts contained in the title represent loose ends which need to be bound together in bite-sized pieces. The first chunk that I will try to extricate is the concept of organizational culture. Following that I will put my fork to the research surrounding the organizational culture of denominational private schools. After a few twists I will end by turning my attention to the role of the principal in all this and the relationships that are constructed.

THE IMPORTANCE OF ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

The theme of organizational culture and the ideas spun from it permeate this study. It is necessary, therefore, to examine the importance of this concept and to come to grips with the actual terminology. Organizational culture is becoming a major theme of the research into business and educational administration. Establishing a vibrant organizational culture is seen as a necessary prerequisite for excellence and success in the business world (Peters & Waterman, 1982; Schein, 1984). More specifically focus on an organization's culture may be a key to the feeling of community within a firm, will improve employees' quality of life, and will increase their awareness of that firm (Frost, Moore, Louis, Lundberg, & Martin, 1985).

Attention to the intricacies of the phrase characterizes research into effective schooling, alternative schools, and critiques of high schools (Owens & Steinhoff, 1989). Fullan (1985), for example, examined the literature on effective schools and found that it involved emphasis on clear goals, high expectations, and progress reports to maximize learning and promote instruction. This was achieved by a professional staff in an orderly environment with parental involvement and district

support; in short, a tightly-knit organizational culture

Although the term has significant implications for administration there has been much theoretical gnashing of teeth over its definition. Indeed those who have argued about and struggled with the concept "have a long way to go before they will have gained empirical ground in understanding what organizational culture is and how it unfolds" (Frost, Moore, Louis, Lundberg, & Martin, 1985, p. 20).

My approach is to divide the phrase up into its two parts, examine some of the metaphors and themes surrounding these terms, and then put the phrase together and move towards a definition. In this treatment I view the metaphor as the picture and the theme as some aspect of that metaphor that can be developed to get closer to a definition. However, while metaphors are succinct and vivid images which may highlight certain characteristics (Krefting & Frost, 1985; Ortony, 1975) and generate more images (Morgan, 1980) caution is in order. They can also shape and constrain (Smircich, 1983) and even imprison (Morgan, 1980) thinking on some subject.

Metaphors for Organization

In the development of organizational theory the images of organizations as machines and organisms have predominated (Foster, 1986; Morgan, 1980; Smircich, 1983). The machine metaphor has its origins in the work of Taylor, Fayol, and Weber (Morgan, 1980) with the principles of scientific management, the functions of administration, and the operation of the bureaucracy. Machines are made by people so that the production of some good can be cheaper, quicker, and more profitable. This image therefore highlights the view of organizations as rational and efficient structures set up to achieve certain ends (Foster, 1986; Morgan, 1980; Smircich, 1983). When words and phrases like "measurement-driven instruction," "standardised testing," and "accountability" are used in educational administration the influence of the machine metaphor can be detected.

The organism metaphor can be seen in the work from the Hawthorne studies in particular and the human relations movement in general (Morgan, 1980) with its psychological treatment of

organizations. To be able to respond and adapt to its environment and thus ensure its continuity an organism's constituent parts must all work well together. In an organizational context the relationship between the organization and its environment has to be maintained and the needs of the people and group within it satisfied (Foster, 1986; Morgan, 1980; Owens, 1987). So, school administrators should be responsive to the needs of students, staff, parents, and board as well as fostering links with the wider community to ensure that the school flourishes.

Morgan (1980) examined other organizational metaphors to show how the insights derived from their use opened up new ways of thinking about them. He used Wittgenstein's metaphor of a language game to demonstrate the interpretive viewpoint of organizations as a collection of individuals playing through words, thoughts, and actions. From these social and linguistic activities comes meaning which is given structure with rules and directions. Therefore with this metaphor understanding the language is the key to perceiving the organization's reality (Foster, 1986).

Life at schools is both a play about the world of work and the preparation for it. In this drama principals' words and deeds carry much weight for they are the directors. They define how the game will be played and make the cuts that, to them, will ensure that the play is a success. Gronn's (1983) article addressed this metaphor for he asserted that administrators controlled the atmosphere of the school by their conversations. A certain group may want to break away from the mainstream culture in the school and play a different game. To develop their own meaning and reality they have to develop their own language game complete with phrases, gestures, mimicry, mime, and signs (Willis, 1980).

The metaphor of an organization as a psychic prison has also been analysed by Morgan (1980). The idea contained in it is that the individual's mind has been subverted by organizational propaganda into thinking in a particular way. If one regards schooling as a means by which students are socialised into the larger culture then the process may well involve gentle influence, persuasive argument, direct incentives, or subtle subversion. To use Chomsky's idea, consent has thus been manufactured.

In this context administrators may be regarded as the prison governors as they are the prime agents in this socialization

process since they have a vested interest in the maintenance of the school's legitimacy (Foster, 1986). As prison warders teachers have a more ambivalent role since they are both undergoing the socialization process and acting as chief enforcers of it. Giddens (1979) mentioned that the oppressed will see through the social structures that oppress them and in this context students and indeed teachers may make the rational decision to break out of or leave this alienating system.

Themes for Organization

Emanating from the term "organization" and the metaphors above are the themes of order and orderliness (Krefting and Frost, 1985; Meadows, 1967; Morgan, 1980; Smircich, 1983) and humanity (Foster, 1986; Greenfield, 1984; Morgan, 1980; Smircich, 1983). Both Meadows (1967) and Morgan (1980) pointed out that in the theme of order was a human attempt to make sense of the world against the backdrop of chaos. The perception of order can be detected in the preceding metaphors as in each of them bonds, links or relationships may be seen that shackle chaos and provide a reason to be. A set of machines operated together may make almost identical products, an organism is an integrated combination of elements, language games have their rules for players to abide by, and psychic prisons try to reinforce relationships built on control and subservience.

The human theme comes out very strongly as well. For Greenfield (1984) organizations "are the facade that covers human intention and will" and behind them lurk "human actors who do what they want to do" (p. 152). So, in this representation human interplay is the essence of the organization. As an added psychodynamic dimension to this theme Smircich (1983) has noted the role that unconscious thought processes may play in organizational practices (p. 342). Again the human element may be uncovered by looking at the metaphors. Humans have to survive in a difficult and changeable environment. So, machines, relationships, games, and prisons may be used to ensure survival and then comfort.

It is interesting that Berrien (1976) and Ouchi (1980) have linked the two themes of order and human interaction. Berrien

(1976) has described the organization as "an integrated system" (p. 43) which depends on people working in harmony. Ouchi (1980) saw the organization as a stable pattern of human exchanges (p. 140).

Metaphors for Culture

There has been much anthropological controversy over the definition of culture, the second word in the phrase, and Erikson (1987) stated that this situation has left us with a "fuzzy understanding" (p. 12) of it. Geertz (1976) too warned that theorizing could leave one in a "conceptual morass" (p. 4) but he added that it was necessary to recognize this and proceed carefully.

Kluckhohn (1949) compared culture to the use of a sieve in describing how a group will employ the material and ideological discoveries that meet their particular needs. This metaphor was also used by Friesen (1983) to show how officially blessed information or interpretation is passed on to individuals for their acceptance. Similarly, Schein (1984) thought that culture is developed by a group or individual and then taught as being the right thing to do. As this picture is examined the frame that separates the sieve from the psychic prison may well begin to blur.

Kluckhohn (1949) and Friesen (1983) also pictured culture as a map. Kluckhohn (1949) stated that a map is an "abstract representation of a particular area" and "a culture is an abstract description of trends towards uniformity in the words, deeds, and artifacts of a human group" (p. 28). Both Kluckhohn (1949) and Friesen (1983) argued that a cultural map was a method of helping individuals through life. This idea of culture being a route for people to take has been put into a school context by Sergiovanni (1984). He wrote that a successful school's culture "serves as a compass setting to steer people in a common direction" (p. 10).

It may also be seen in terms of a root; something fundamental and generative (Smircich, 1983). The fundamental part of this metaphor is caught by Sergiovanni (1987) in his statement that "culture governs how members should think, feel, and behave" (p. 59). The generative aspect of it can be detected in Schein's (1984) point that in the emergence of a group of people

culture was their source of strength and identity. Given that a root is hidden from view there is also a connection with Wolcott's (1985) description of it as an elusive phenomenon. Finally, as Kluckhohn (1949) argued the basic attributes of particular cultures may prove to be difficult for the most articulate insider to grasp and identify (p. 32).

To see culture as a web also sheds light on the term. Weber (1949) wrote that "culture is a finite segment of the meaningless infinity of the world process, a segment on which human beings confer meaning and significance" (p. 25). Geertz (1975) acknowledged Weber's pattern of thought and added that "man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun" and he took "culture to be those webs" (p.5). When this human web is spun it binds together many groups with certain core symbols (Erickson, 1987; Geertz, 1975). With this bonding process people's work and lives "take on a new importance, one characterized by richer meanings, an expanded sense of identity, and a feeling of belonging to something special" (Sergiovanni, 1984, p. 9). Like Smircich's (1983) root the web is something not easily detected. So while culture is present it is hard for members and non members alike to describe and define it.

Themes for Culture

Culture, too, involves the themes of order and humanity (Geertz, 1975; Greenfield, 1984; Gregory, 1983; Kluckhohn, 1949) since "we cannot escape ourselves as we make our world" (Greenfield, 1984, p. 143). Because escape is impossible then culture is a method of coping with our actions, desires, and experiences (Gregory, 1983). To mix this with the metaphors, individuals become rooted in a web of meaning and can use this heightened consciousness to sift through their experiences and ponder life itself. Thus order emerges, as through their insight beliefs and then rules, traditions, and myths are established as a framework for existence.

Themes for Organizational Culture

With the explanation of the terms "organization" and "culture" shrouded in uncertainty it is not surprising that that the phrase "organizational culture" has the same definitional mist surrounding it. Nevertheless there are themes woven through it (Frost, Moore, Louis, Lundberg, & Martin, 1985) which may assist in this definitive process. Smircich (1983) has stated that "the linking of culture and organization is the linking of two sets of images of order" (p. 341). Since this order does not emerge by itself then the human link between organizations and their cultures should be recognised as well.

As order is established human norms and assumptions become part of the tapestry in an organizational culture. Owens and Steinhoff (1989) wrote that these two themes recur in much of the literature devoted to organizational culture. Norms they asserted are the accepted standards of behaviour that are enforced and reinforced in a particular institution. Put into an educational context Sergiovanni (1987) mentioned that culture supplies the norms that inform people in schools about what they should be doing and how they should do it. These norms are the manifestations of more elusive assumptions which Owens and Steinhoff (1989) regard as the hidden values and beliefs that provide a frame of reference for people's behaviour. They "deal with what people in the organization accept as true in the world and what is false, what is sensible and what is absurd, what is possible and what is impossible" (p. 11). Schein (1984) also underlined the importance of assumptions in the first part of his often quoted definition. As he put it, "Organizational culture is the pattern of basic assumptions that a given group has invented, discovered, or developed" (p. 3).

While organizations and the people in them provide a sense of orderliness and a framework of assumptions on which norms are based they can also help individuals make sense of their lives, find their vocation in life, or seek meaning for their lives. Frost, Moore, Louis, Lundberg, and Martin (1985) felt therefore that "organizations may be settings through which shared meanings may emerge" (p. 19). By comparison Smircich (1983) argued that

human interaction is a shaper of meaning crucial to the organization's existence. Certainly people in institutions communicate constantly on topics ranging from the sublime to the ridiculous and have established a social network of dependence. In an educational context the theme of meaning also comes across as culture has been described as "a source of meaning and significance for teachers, students, administrators, and others as they work" (Sergiovanni, 1987, p. 59).

Finally, organizational culture is developed over time and much of the literature points to history, myths, rituals, heroes, and heroines so important to culture building (Owens & Steinhoff, 1989). Schein's (1984) stress on the importance of a framework of fundamental assumptions also emphasizes that these assumptions have been learned over time. As well Smircich's (1983) argument that organizational development is sustained by language, symbols, myths, stories, and rituals carries with it historical overtones. One of the many high school traditions is the bell schedule and in American high schools it is based on the Carnegie Units of Instruction. The schedule has become ingrained in the system, is always being reinforced by experience, and it has become difficult for teachers and administrators to see any other way of doing things (Owens, 1987).

Definitions of Organizational Culture

These themes of order, humanity, norms, assumptions, meaning, and historical development can be identified in definitions of organizational culture. Owens (1987) asserted that organizational culture was composed of norms that should be adopted, rules of the game, shared assumptions, values of importance, and deep meanings developed over time. Schein's (1984) definition involved a framework of fundamental assumptions, shared meanings, "the correct way to perceive, think, and feel" (p. 3), and a timeline for passing things on. Smircich (1985) saw organizational culture as "a fairly stable set of taken-for-granted assumptions, shared beliefs, meanings, and values that form a kind of backdrop for action" (p. 58). In educational institutions "the 'stuff' of culture includes a school's customs and traditions, historical accounts, stated and unstated

understandings, habits, norms and expectations, common meanings, and shared assumptions" Sergiovanni, 1987, p. 59).

ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE AND DENOMINATIONAL PRIVATE SCHOOLS

With some of the metaphors, themes, and definitions analysed the research into the organizational culture of denominational private schools may now be examined. From the research it seems that these schools are communities of faith which espouse an ethic of care, encourage value consensus, and consciously promote a religious lifestyle.

Communities of Faith

As touched on earlier the study of organizational culture is important in the search for community in the workplace, a search that "is widespread and a fundamental part of human existence" (Frost, Moore, Louis, Lundberg, & Martin, 1985, p. 15). Community in this quote refers to a perception rather than a structure or to use Coleman's (1987) phrase a "value community" rather than a "functional community." Another point is that it involves a group of people with a strong feeling of togetherness, a common purpose, and a sense of concord rather than the more general idea of a group subject to the same laws. Plude (1974) has argued that "without the real bond based on love and shared goals" (p. 28) the term loses much of its vitality.

Both Owens (1987) and Sergiovanni (1987) have recognised that schools are communities and culture plays an important role in knitting that community together. However, the literature on denominational schools has not only recognised this but also added a deeper dimension to this strand of thought. Denominational schools are many and varied but the thread of religion runs strongly through them and provides them with this deeper feeling of community. Religion offers a sense of coherence and meaning, a foundation of values, and a code of behaviour (Rose, 1988) and a religious perspective is more concerned with commitment and encounter than detachment and analysis (Geertz, 1973). Therefore Sykes (1990) wrote of private denominational schools forming "a

community of belief [which] can supply esprit and commitment to transcendent ideals that are powerfully motivating" (p.106).

The Ethic of Care

The research suggests that a school as a religious community is characterized by a real care for others, an identity with the espoused values, and a challenge to live through these values. The idea of care surrounds a concern about the quality of people's lives together and how this quality may be nurtured. An act which demonstrates care may involve love, inclination, or duty but the result is that a web of trust occurs between people (Noddings, 1988). Like a web this trust may seem fragile or may not be easily identified but if constructed well it will prove to be extremely resilient.

One of the goals at St. Mary's, the Catholic boarding school that Kleinfeld (1979) observed, was the development of a feeling of care and responsibility for others. She found that this spirit or caring pervaded the daily existence of the school, something that Grant (1982) and Lesko (1988) also referred to. In the context of Bethany Baptist Academy, the fundamentalist Christian school that Peshkin (1986) studied, care took the form of an all-embracing concern with the spiritual health of the students. The importance of this responsibility came out in the comment of the headmaster that they operated a Christian school as they believed that God wanted them to teach His children. In reacting to questions concerning discipline Amish teachers stressed the necessity of respecting and trusting children, being firm rather than stern, and being cheerful and slow to anger (Hostetler & Huntington, 1971).

Remarks made by students attest to the importance of this ethic of caring. Girls at Bethany Baptist Academy were asked about the advice they might give to new girls. They stated that teachers cared about them, they would take the time to help them understand their course work, and they were always prepared to talk to them. In a similar question boys emphasized that teachers really wanted to help them and wished to know if their message was getting through (Peshkin, 1986). When Rose (1988) questioned students at Covenant, a charismatic Christian school, about what they would miss after graduation most answers

mentioned the caring relationship with the teachers. At St. Anne's, a private co-educational Catholic secondary school, Lesko (1988) noted the same sort of comments. One student liked the caring atmosphere and feeling of togetherness. Another felt that even if you were not taught by teachers you could go and talk to them.

In a school community an emphasis on care may bring increased self-esteem, greater emotional security, and an enhanced quality of life for all groups. Bryk (1988) argued that this was the case in Catholic schools and the message that all students were valued was the catalyst. Neal (1972) wrote that he sensed a friendly family atmosphere when he visited Catholic schools and used phrases like "a relaxed informality" and "a genuine sense of relationship" to illustrate his point. Also an urban Catholic school principal interviewed by Smith (1982) stated that in the turmoil of societal change the school represented a "a secure and trustworthy institution" (p. 14). At Bethany Baptist Academy the same sentiment was expressed by a student who said "I don't love all the teachers there, but I know that everyone of them is born again and this makes me feel secure" (Peshkin, 1986, p. 62).

A Value Consensus

Strong identification with the prevailing values or at the very least a respect for them is another important feature of a school as a community of faith. This is consistent with the argument that a school is more likely to achieve its objectives if there is consensus among school groups about those objectives and the values that underline them.

Teachers and Value Consensus

Denominational private schools attract teachers who want to pursue their vocation in the company of people with the same values (Peshkin, 1986; Rose, 1988; Sykes, 1990). Despite the low salaries and the onerous demands on their time the teachers at Bethany Baptist Academy would only teach in a fundamentalist and Christian environment because of its special significance for them

(Peshkin, 1986). Teachers at Covenant School were aware of the profound challenges and responsibilities of their work. In response they, like their colleagues and community members, strove to build meaningful, secure, and familial relationships in harmony with their beliefs (Rose, 1988).

In recent years with few exceptions Amish children have been taught in one-room private schools (Kraybill, 1989). Despite this potentially isolating force the teachers are required to be well versed in their religious faith, committed to Amish values like humility, obedience, and love for others, and be integrated members of the community (Hostetler & Huntington, 1971; Kraybill, 1989). It is not perhaps surprising that Hostetler and Huntington (1971) noted that teaching was the beginning to be thought of as a calling in Amish society!

The value consensus at St. Mary's also emerged because of the common religious tradition of the staff (Kleinfeld, 1979). Furthermore this tradition stretched back to the staff's own schooling. The statistics Kleinfeld (1979) gathered indicated that 88% of the volunteers at St. Mary's in 1974 had attended Catholic primary and secondary schools and 80% of them had gone to Catholic colleges. The similarity of experience was a factor at St. Anne's, too, as Lesko (1988) found that seventeen out of sixty faculty were former graduates of the school.

Some denominational schools have a much looser value consensus and an example of this is Bishop McGregor School, established under state auspices in Britain (Burgess, 1983). Although it is not a private school it merits attention in this study as it was set up to be a distinctly Catholic school. The more diluted value consensus stems from the large percentage of non-Catholic teachers as well as the attitudes of the teachers themselves.

Burgess (1983) noted that it was the intention of Geoffrey Goddard, the headmaster, to attract the maximum number of Catholic teachers to the school. However, at the time of the study the percentage of Catholic to non-Catholic teachers was 55% to 45%. While he did not observe any overt conflict between the groups he did notice that Catholic teachers held far more positions of pastoral and academic power and responsibility. Burgess (1983) also remarked that while Geoffrey Goddard stressed the

crucial importance of religion in the school the same could not be said for the staff judging by their attendance at weekly mass and daily house assemblies. In addition their reasons for attending these functions ranged from the importance of being seen there, to an active demonstration of loyalty, and to a need for active participation in worship.

Students and Value Consensus

A school community may be said to be stronger if the students also subscribe to or are likely to go along with the underlying values that are promoted (Holmes & Wynne, 1989). Although school may be regarded by students as something they have to grit their teeth and put up with Peshkin (1986) discovered that in general students were committed Christians in the Bethany Baptist Academy sense. Through articles in the student magazine, letters to their friends, and interviews with his team they adhered to the same norms and values that other school groups did. Rose (1988) noted the comments of the teachers that if their students were enrolled in public schools they would be regarded as angelic. This assumes that they felt that the students subscribed to prevailing school values although they admitted that they would still challenge pupils to be better.

Whether in interviews with students and graduates or in classroom observations Kleinfeld (1979) noticed a real identity with the dominant school values. In classes, for example, she found that students handed her their books so that she could see what was going on and then shared someone else's text. Another illustration of sensitivity and support for one another at St. Mary's came when a volunteer was talking about a difficult classroom moment. A senior boy stood up in that classroom and said to the others, "These are new teachers, you'll have to give them time too" (p. 36). Lesko's (1988) conclusion was that the established values at St. Anne's were mirrored in the students' thoughtfulness about the school and the people in it. In this way the school experience held more meaning for the students and enabled them to move beyond school.

At Bishop McGregor School, though, Burgess (1983) found that there was no real consistency in the way that norms and values

were presented to the students. This is understandable since the faculty interpreted school norms and values in different ways and there was a perceived division of roles and responsibilities between pastoral and departmental staff. However, a headmasterly reminder of Bishop McGregor School's norms and values to the leavers and a show of solidarity from the staff successfully halted their practice of uniform-tearing on the final day. As Burgess (1983) put it, Geoffrey Goddard was "the most powerful definer of social reality" and "he imposed a framework on the situation" (p. 117) which informed teachers and students of his expectations.

Support from the Functional Community

So, it may be argued that if the students support what their denominational school stands for then it is a strong value community. Logically it is probable that they are part of a vibrant functional community or neighbourhood that shares the same place of worship (Coleman, 1987). In so far as the functional community provides a shared moral language, history, and sense of meaning (Guerra, Donahue, & Benson, 1990) its importance cannot be overlooked. Since the parents and the church provide the linkages between the school and the external environment their role in value consensus should be addressed.

Links between Bethany Baptist Academy and the functional community around it were certainly both close and powerful. The admission interview, the signing of the "Pledge of Acceptance," and the parent-teacher fellowship meetings were instruments by which parental adoption of the school's special significance was ensured and reinforced (Peshkin, 1986). However, Peshkin (1986) thought that in reality more stress was placed on parental cooperation and support achieved through an empathy with the administrators and teachers and what they were trying to do.

Covenant School was also closely entwined with its functional community (Rose, 1989). Most parents were personal friends of the teachers, they were involved in the same social functions, and 40% of the parents volunteered at the school on a regular basis. This sort of relationship could become tense as while parents were considered to have ultimate authority for the

training of their children teachers felt bound by their vocation to comment on certain behaviour. The relationship, though, was based on common interests stemming from their religious beliefs and prayer was often used to reduce conflict and enhance solidarity.

Amish school board members have responsibility for hiring, firing, paying salaries, maintaining the buildings, and providing curriculum assistance (Kraybill, 1989). Since the boards are elected by the parents it follows that the latter have a degree of control and yet within this framework teachers have much latitude in the way they operate. Again the teachers have close ties with the parents and their relationship with the board is also personal.

Even though St. Mary's was a boarding school a functional community existed because of the network provided by the Jesuits. If a student was worried by a family illness then the local parish priest would look into it. Father D's visit to Anchorage allowed family news to be passed around and family ties and friendships to be strengthened. Kleinfeld (1979) also noted that many parents were in agreement with the school's philosophy and felt that their children were in good hands.

The parents associated with Bishop McGregor School had Catholic backgrounds and prior to the school's opening Geoffrey Goddard assured them of the school's Catholicity. He also spoke of "the communality of purpose between the church, parents, teachers, and pupils" (Burgess, 1983, p. 32) and commented that this would be regularly reinforced with letters and meetings. The more informal and personal contact with the parents came through the operation of the house system, though Burgess (1983) did not describe this contact in detail.

The links between the school and the church were firm at Bethany Baptist Academy and Covenant School and reflected their respective world views. With the prevailing attitude among the administration and staff at the former school that this was God's school and that they were carrying out God's plan it followed that the church-school links were close. Furthermore it was Pastor William Muller's belief that Bethany Baptist Academy was the church's academic expression (Peshkin, 1986). Since the elders of the church decided to form the latter school they could influence the way the school ran. The operation of Covenant School mirrored

church and community values and was directed by the Holy Spirit (Rose, 1989).

The Amish communities studied by Hostetler and Huntington (1971) and Kraybill (1989) believed that formal religious training belonged at church and in the home. Amish teachers were, however, required to cooperate with church teachings. In this cooperation it was expected that they would be examples and inculcators of Amish religious beliefs in a persuasive but informal way. Once again the church-school tie was close.

According to Van Brummelen (1986) the tradition in Calvinist schools has been for a much looser relationship between church and school. School board members often served on church councils and so church views could be aired but the assumption was that the principals "knew what was best for the schools" (p. 256) and so the approach was more laissez-faire. He did, however, state that the church would have objected if the school had begun to move away from Calvinist doctrine.

Bishop McGregor School and St. Mary's provide interesting contrasts. At the former the local parish priest, Father Mooney, was the school chaplain and a member of the religious education department (Burgess, 1983). The link between the church and the school, though obviously present, shared some of that Calvinist distance. At St. Mary's, church and school operated together as the school was administered by the Jesuit order and the Ursulines did much of the teaching. They set the religious tone of the school and ensured that students were steeped in broad Catholic values (Kleinfeld, 1979).

The Purpose of Values

At denominational private schools there is an unambiguous emphasis on certain specific values and there are definite attempts to bind people and groups to them so that their lives may take on new meaning. This has its reflections in the literature as Smith (1982) suggested that the most frequently cited purpose of these private schools is to promote Christian values and a Christian way of life. Young's (1972) lament was that secularism failed to raise thinking towards transcendent religious ideals and he felt that the mandate of Catholic schools was to restore

people's sense of the religious. To Buetow (1988) this process was one of providing freedom "to risk, to trust, to grow, to seek God" (p. 223). Borrowing Hodgkinson's (1983) value hierarchy, the emphasis is on breaking through the rational barrier and searching for the inspirational poetry of the soul!

In orientation meetings with parents Geoffrey Goddard explained that since Bishop McGregor was a Catholic school students would be encouraged to embrace the beliefs and values of Catholicism. This identification in turn would help them to lead a more complete life (Burgess, 19830. The same general sentiments were expressed at St. Mary's in the formal statement of the school's philosophy. More specifically, though, the core values of goodness, cooperation, and care were promoted as a way of life and an active rather than passive interpretation was advocated (Kleinfeld, 1979).

For fundamentalist Christian schools the villain of the piece is the secular humanist influence of the public schools (Maslen, 1982; Peshkin, 1986; Rose, 1988). Therefore the emphasis is on getting the kids out to serve the Lord so that they can counteract "the Devil's darts" (Peshkin, 1986, p. 111). Rose (1988) found that the Lakehaven Academy method was to nurture students' faith so that they could withstand secular forces on their own. By contrast at Covenant School the strategy was to prepare the students for a disciplined offensive against a decadent world (Rose, 1988). Peshkin (1986) wrote that Tom McGraw saw Bethany Baptist Academy as a Christian vocational school. The intention was for graduates to be Christian professionals but the school also prepared them with an education fit for Christian people (p. 57).

The more defensive purpose of protecting a culture by instilling in each generation of students a particular model of life can be seen in Amish (Hostetler & Huntington, 1970; Kraybill, 1989) and in Jewish (Schiff, 1968; Maslen, 1982; Rauch, 1984) schools. Kraybill (1989) described the political and legal struggle of Amish people to keep their children away from what they considered to be an increasingly pervasive state school system. Following their success the resultant one-roomed private Amish schools are "a massive effort in social engineering" (p. 133). On a similar note Maslen (1982) reflected on the rapid expansion of Jewish schooling in Australia. He concluded that "the Jews have

come to regard education as essential to survival for a minority facing cultural assimilation, economic integration, and social acceptance" (p. 184).

Maslen (1982) also told the story of one Jewish girl who, despite serious misgivings about the sheltered and force-fed characteristics of her school, had grown to admire the Jewish beliefs, traditions, and culture. She also asserted that parents supported this kind of school as they wanted their sons and daughters to marry people of the same religion and keep it alive (p. 193). Radic (1972) expressed the comparable hope that sending his son to a private Catholic school would enable him to embrace a specifically Christian view of the world (p. 92-3).

THE ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL

So, one may discern that in these schools the theme of care for everyone is emphasized and specific values are taught as a way to live a good life. The role of the principal or headmaster in this process is widely regarded as crucial (Buetow, 1988; Kelly, 1990; Kraushaar, 1972; Lightfoot, 1983; Praetz, 1980) but the exact nature of that role is elusive. Various metaphors have been used to describe the role of the school administrator and while some of them picture it as a reaction to unfolding events others show it as working towards a vision of the future.

Metaphors of Reaction

As an example of the first set of images the principal's role may be viewed as that of a fireman (Wolcott, 1979b). Wolcott (1979b) based this interpretation on his observation of Ed Bell, an elementary school principal, as he saw Ed reacting to emergencies that arose. With this imagery preventative measures may only be adopted when there is a lull in the action. The constant threat of interruption is always there and answering the telephone or sorting through the mail may mean the opening of Pandora's box.

A view of the administrator's role as a balancing act (Spindler, 1979) also depicts reactive imagery. Equilibrium must be obtained for survival and so as some force pulls the tightrope walker one way he or she must react to that force in order to

restore a sense of balance. With that newly found stability the process of inching forward towards some goal may continue. Spindler (1979) made the telling point in trying to pull the school groups together into a working equilibrium the principal is hampered by differences in their perceptions (p. 101). This points towards Blumberg and Greenfield's (1986) statement that the administrator operates in a political milieu where there are scarce resources and conflicting agendas.

Metaphors of Anticipation

In her portrait of Bill Oates, the rector of St. Paul's School, Lightfoot (1983) used the metaphor of an Edwardian father figure to describe his operation. To faculty and students "his image combined a benign, autocratic style that felt both protective and frightening" (p. 326). Though his leadership appeared distant and dominant his manner was both calm and assured. His role as guide or protector was offered in return for loyalty and obedience.

This picture also fits in with Maslen's (1982) description of some of the private school administrators he visited. He found in Dr. Anthony Shinkfield, the headmaster of the Church of England Collegiate of St. Peter, a well-tried administrator of brisk authority and cool imperturbability. Mark Bishop of Cranbrook School combined a "no-nonsense air of command ," with "an infectious grin, a sharp mind," and "a sense of bottled up energy ready to burst through at any moment" (p. 55).

A reflection on his own position of principal at St. Albert's Catholic High School provided the metaphors of "priest, prophet, and king" (Kelly, 1990, p. 41). As a priest the principal is called on to mediate between God and the world, to sanctify the students, and to make a community of possibility out of "the agony of the world" (p. 41). The principal as prophet has to diagnose the present in light of the Gospels and proceed to judge, act, and change. The kingly role involves a life of service and an accountability for the talents that have been provided (Kelly, 1990). Buetow (1988) used the metaphors of counsellor, parent and priest to describe the Catholic principal's role but the same religious sentiment is evident. In this portrayal the principal's advice "facilitates the marriage of God and his people" and his or

her decisions "make Christ's presence more palpable in people's lives" (p. 260).

Attending to Relationships

While the school administrator is continually trying to solve household crises, guide the lives of the family members, or seek to build a community of faith he or she has a number of relationships to attend to. Like the fashioning of a web these relationships that are developed bring everything together by providing structure and meaning. Indeed, Goffman (1961) argued that survival for an institution depends on the success of the process by which members are enmeshed in the web of identity and affinity.

The idea that the principal tries to spin this web of significance (Geertz, 1973) that binds together the various school groups has much credence in the literature. Lightfoot (1983), for example, wrote that principals are the voices of schools and as such they communicate their vision to the relevant constituencies. This whole action has been variously described as binding the wills of others (Greenfield, 1984; Radomsky, 1980-1), bonding teachers, students and others together as believers (Sergiovanni, 1987), and as drawing faculty, students, and parents into a community (Buetow, 1988; Grant, 1981; Guerra, Donahue, & Benson, 1990). Of necessity this action must inspire the faculty, obtain the respect of the students, and gain the trust of the parents (Lightfoot, 1983). While establishing these kinds of relationships may be a never-ending task it is vital to the success of the school (Buetow, 1988; Kraushaar, 1972).

Examples of Attention to Relationships

In a sense Tom McGraw's web was easy to spin since the various constituencies of Bethany Baptist Academy were either actively committed to Christian schooling or at least understood and concurred with what was going on (Peshkin, 1986). However, he recognised the great difficulties of living as a Christian and he knew that being a born-again Christian did not mean that behaviour would not lapse. Therefore he continually reinforced the message to teachers, students, and parents.

His relationship with the teachers was strong. It was nurtured by a reciprocal arrangement of loyalty and obedience from the teachers in return for the support and concern of the administration. With the tacit and sometimes active backing of Pastor William Muller he reinforced the teacher code of conduct, reminded them of the details of their contract, and restated the student behaviour that they should enforce.

The link with the student body was forged in the light of his belief that they were a very vulnerable group and needed careful and constant supervision. The structure of control involved a catalogue of rules about dress and grooming, personal contact, respect for authority, and punctuality. In addition the students were repeatedly informed about the distinctive nature of their school.

The ties with the parental group were also strong as many parents believed in the same guiding principles. However, the reins were longer than for teachers and students. The tie was not simply the purchase of a service as they were required to cooperate with school policy. In return their children were provided with Christian fundamentalist schooling and a particular vision for life (Peshkin, 1986).

Geoffrey Goddard of Bishop McGregor School also defined his role in terms of communication with the constituencies and his belief was that he had much to do with the shaping of the school. However, "he was none the less aware that his ideas, hopes, and plans for McGregor were manipulated, changed, and redefined by various groups in the school" (Burgess, 1983, p. 31).

Certain features of the school made weaving the web of meaning a difficult task. Size was certainly a factor as by 1973 the school was classified as a large comprehensive school. The house system was seen as a solution but actually complicated things. The diocesan policy was to place Catholics in pastoral positions but Catholics only represented 52% of the total staff in 1974. While Burgess (1983) stated that this did not lead to overt jealousy or conflict it could crystallize opinions. Thus, different groups of teachers saw the school's operation from different angles and offered different views about it.

Geoffrey Goddard's relationship with the teachers developed through formal meetings, letters, and assemblies and through

informal talks, advice, memos, and presence (Burgess, 1983). His many directives and suggestions were backed up by his own actions and he created an operational framework for them. In this way he helped them to understand how he wanted the school to run and what standards of student behaviour should be encouraged and discouraged.

He communicated his expectations to the students in similar ways: the lecture at assembly, the typed notices on the boards, the handwritten memo, and the informal meeting. Assemblies, for example, were used as a means of showing how a Catholic school should operate and what the wider Catholic neighbourhood thought about their conduct (Burgess, 1983). Certainly the link between Geoffrey Goddard and the student group was forged with disciplinary measures but emphasis was also placed on self-discipline.

To obtain parental acquiescence he held initial meetings to tell them about the way he wanted a Catholic school to run. The regular parent evenings supplied them with information about academic and non-academic courses in particular and the curriculum in general (Burgess, 1983). There was a definite bond with the parents because all the pupils came from Catholic families but there was a voluntary and informal aspect to it.

Lesko (1988) did not dwell on relationships but she did examine the way that Phil Presny, the principal of St. Anne's, addressed the new students at their orientation session. As he stressed that St. Anne's was a closely-knit community and that everyone wanted them to feel at home she wrote that he was already "acting on the group, shaping them and the way they saw each other" (Lesko, 1988, p. 44).

IN CONCLUSION

In conclusion I have focussed on organizational culture, the organizational culture of a denominational private school, and the role of the principal in this system. I have used metaphors and themes from the academic literature to shed some light on these concepts. From this I now turn to my own research and the various methods I employed.

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGICAL JOURNEY

Having bound some of the relevant literary strands together the methodological journey can now be recounted. Burgess (1985) provided an ideal research process that involved the design of a problem, the selection of the sample, the collection and analysis of the data, and the writing of the report. However, like Bechofer (1974) and Wax (1971) he acknowledged that the actual process was somewhat messy. In making my own journey I have had to examine alternative paths, retrace my steps to avoid getting lost, and keep an eye on the weather so it has been an adventure rather than a route march. What follows is a description of the way I gained access to and acceptance in the school and how I collected and analyzed the data for the study.

SELECTING THE PARTICIPANT

In the summer of 1990 my deliberations over the selection of the participant and the place resolved themselves. Despite Peshkin's (1986) assertion that it was comparatively easy to gain access to a Catholic school I still thought of it as a significant hurdle. In the end I decided to make use of a university contact who was also a gatekeeper (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982) in one of the school systems.

As I sought and gained permission to carry out my study I tried to combine personal contact (Rose, 1988) with telephone calls and a written proposal (Lesko, 1988). I telephoned the gatekeeper, Dennis Sutcliffe, and he expressed interest in my inquiry and said that he would mention it to Allan Greenlees, the principal in question. Later the same day I telephoned Allan. As with Dennis Sutcliffe I gave him a simple outline of what I wanted to do being aware that "it is crucial to begin the research without specifically predetermined categories of observation, questionnaires, [and] precise hypotheses" (Wilcox, 1982, p. 459). He was very enthusiastic and to my amazement virtually agreed to my proposal on the spot. We did arrange to meet in July so that we

could get to know one another and so that I could make a more formal presentation of my intentions.

Initial Meetings

On the morning of that first meeting I took care to dress appropriately (Delamont, 1984; Rose, 1988) in dark grey trousers, a light blue shirt, a dark blue tie, and a lightweight jacket and arrived just before the scheduled time. At that meeting I went through my proposal with Allan and reaffirmed that confidentiality would be maintained and that my conduct at the school would be discrete. Allan, in turn, told me about the history of the school and his vision for the future. We ended by agreeing to meet near to the start of the term to continue the acclimatization process and to iron out specific details and implications. I walked down the steps to the carpark that morning and gazed over the houses and offices towards the majestic, snow-capped mountains beyond. This was surely a good omen for the future.

The second meeting took place just before Labour Day. I showed Allan the outline that I had prepared for the university ethics committee as a further sign of good faith. Allan said that he could not foresee any problems and stated that he would soon get used to having a shadow. In fact he got so used to his shadow that after one classroom visit he collided with it, much to the amusement of that teacher and those students! Then he took me on a tour of the main building and introduced me to Bruce McLean, the vice principal, and Penny Foster and Sue Whitfield, the administrative assistants. We ended up checking textbooks together as a delivery had arrived that did not match the purchase order. Allan remarked that he had not meant to put me to work just yet!

The Process of Acceptance

At times during the first days I felt awkward (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982), lonely, and strange (Ball, 1984) in this new environment. I also worried about the quality of the data that I was beginning to collect (Ball, 1984; Bogdan & Biklen, 1982). However, Allan, the administrative staff, and the faculty did their

best to welcome me to school life. Allan made a point of coming over to me at the part of the Commencement Service known as "The Peace". He also introduced me to the members of the faculty with comments like "think of him as a silent partner" and "well you've heard of Peter Pan and his shadow . . . " Penny provided me with cups of coffee during these early days and made sure that I had my own coffee mug. Judith Chisholm invited me to observe the group dynamics in her classroom.

The researcher's feeling of not belonging will dissipate as he or she is accepted by the relevant group or individual (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982). Just as in Wolcott's (1979a) case I became known as "The Shadow" and I too feel that this was "a way to jokingly acknowledge my presence and purpose" (p. 381). This recognition continued as I was often greeted with "hello shadow" and on two occasions the song, "Me and My Shadow", was whistled as Allan and I strolled down the corridor.

As I was recognized and accepted I was also seen as a feature of the school and a conduit to the principal. Sometimes while I sat alone in the library or the main office people would ask me where Allan was. At other times I would be given verbal messages to pass on to Allan and once or twice when he was using the telephone people would use signs and gestures to find out from me how long he would be. When Louise Turner wanted a photograph of Allan and me for the yearbook she explained that I was a fixture at the school. Also in the same publication meeting me in the liquor store before the school dance was mentioned as one grade twelve girl's worst memory!

DATA COLLECTION

Gathering data has been compared with the operation of dredging, in that a site is chosen and then all the relevant data are collected (Hammersly, 1984). Or as Everhardt (1979) put it, "Individuals using an ethnographic approach attempt to cast a wide net as they piece together the complex interweaving of people, events, conditions, and meanings interacting in a specific setting" (p. 412). The most common ways of obtaining cultural data are through observations at the site, interviews, and document collection (Owens & Steinhoff, 1989), although questionnaires have

been used to supplement that information (Delamont, 1984; Peshkin, 1982; Wolcott, 1979a).

Observations

For the researcher there are decisions to be made about the degree to which he or she should participate (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982). On the one hand a researcher may observe a scene from a hide like a "Wendy House" (King, 1984) and on the other hand he or she may actively participate as a part time teacher (Ball, 1984; Burgess, 1983). As Wilcox (1982) said, "The ethnographer frequently moves into the role of participant observer as s/he has coffee in the faculty lounge, hangs around the playground, [and] goes to PTA meetings" (p. 461). Like Delamont (1984) my own approach was primarily to lurk and watch (p. 27) and I must have been fairly successful at it because one student remarked to Allan that for a long time he thought that I could not hear! However, this did not stop me from using the coffee machine in the staff room, joining in conversations about the NHL, or sympathizing with Sue about the amount of time she spent dealing with late arrivals to school.

As an observer I was present at St. David's School for three mornings a week from September to mid-December, 1990. This timetable was flexible, though, as most of my interviews with Allan took place in the afternoon, and many meetings occurred in the evening. I also shadowed him for longer periods to get a feel for his own schedule and I often retired to the library after lunch to tidy up my field notes. King's (1984) field of action was the school and as such he attended school functions like assemblies and concerts, spent time in the faculty room, and talked with many adults associated with the school. In a similar fashion I went to school assemblies, meetings of the faculty, board, and parent group, took part in the professional development day, and attended the Commencement Service. In addition I logged many miles with Allan as he pounded the corridors and supervised the gym and eating areas. I realized early that Allan did need time to himself and that I needed to explore his actions from other angles so I often ate my sandwiches in the faculty room and used the library to immerse myself in the web of relevant literature.

One recommended strategy for note-taking since people may be uncomfortable if they see a researcher scribbling away is to write them down after leaving the site. However, note-taking may be appropriate if the participant is making notes or explaining complex procedures (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982). In practice researchers have approached this aspect of observation differently being concerned about the reliability of their notes. King (1984) made entries into his small notebook whenever he could but rather than copy them up in the faculty room he used the washroom. Hammersly (1984) often jotted down notes after he had left the faculty room but on one occasion he wrote hurriedly on a newspaper in the hope that nobody would want to read it! So that people would feel it was a natural thing for him to be doing Wolcott (1979a) carried a notebook around with him and wrote a great deal in it. He often made brief notes in the margin and filled in the details later before he returned to the site.

My approach was to carry a pocket-sized notebook around while shadowing Allan and use it when the opportunity presented itself. When Allan settled down to his daily "idiot work" of signing forms, reading reports and letters, and writing in his "to do file" then the notebook would come out. If Allan had a telephone call from his wife then I might slip out of the room and attend to my notes. If he or I had to use the washroom, or if he drove down to the store the notebook would again be used. After the observation sessions I either settled down in the school library or went home to transfer my notes into the larger ring binder. Like Hammersly (1984) I cannot claim to have written down all the words, phrases, and stretches of conversation correctly but I do feel that I got the sense of what was being said.

From the outset it was understood that I would not be privy to the most sensitive conversations, which was similar to Wolcott's (1979a) arrangement. Allan mentioned this to the faculty at the first meeting of the term. He introduced me to parents, board members, and ancillary professionals by stating, "I'd like you to meet Graham Lilly. He's my shadow and is writing a thesis on my role. Do you mind if he stays?" As it turned out there were very few discussions from which I was excluded and they provided a rich vein of data.

Interviews

My second source of data was the interview which Bogdan and Biklen (1982) described as "a purposeful conversation, usually between two people . . . that is directed by one in order to get information" (p. 135). Just as there is a spectrum between participation and observation, interviews can range from completely informal conversations to very structured sessions (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982; Wilcox, 1982). The researcher may encourage the participant to talk at length on some topic of interest and can investigate certain comments and explanations in more depth. Alternatively he or she may adopt a rigid framework of questions that should be asked in sequence with little time for digression, which to Bogdan and Biklen (1982) is on the borderline of qualitative inquiry.

It was only after Wolcott (1979a) had been in the field for six months and had built up a rapport with Ed Bell that the interviews began. Once permission had been granted he used a variety of techniques from taped, semi-structured interviews which lasted one hour, to open-ended conversations with the principal. By contrast King (1984) concentrated on loosely-structured interviews but he kept a list of questions arising from his observations ready in case particular incidents were overlooked. During a seven month period Lesko (1988) talked informally and had formal interviews with administrators, secretaries, students, and teachers. As the students became better acquainted with her she was able to categorize them and so interview pupils from committed and disaffected school groups.

After three visits to St. David's I began to interview Allan. Like King (1984) I prepared a list of questions arising from my early observations of him which I felt needed to be addressed. However, I wanted to keep these interviews relaxed and painless so that the data obtained would be reliable and trustworthy (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982; Gorden, 1975). Hence I gave Allan the scope to define some of the content. I let him talk until there was a significant pause, controlled my own reactions, listened carefully, and then probed to get clarification and examples. This became the pattern for the future; a framework of questions but a built-in flexibility to allow for ideas to be explored, themes to be

developed, and assumptions to be examined. As time went on I looked forward to our conversations together and was very gratified when on the last session Allan said that he had learned much from them and would miss them.

With permission from Allan I used a micro-cassette recorder at the interviews. The recorder proved to be a conversation piece in its own right as it broke down during two interviews and ran out of tape on another occasion. I was able to use it to break the ice, however, by making fun of my ineptitude with gadgets of this sort and by recounting the story of the vague diagnosis I gave to the Radio Shack technician.

I tried to interview Allan once every week for about an hour. Sometimes, though, the sessions went on for longer and at other times they had to be curtailed if Bruce knocked on the door with an inquiry or problem. Also if I thought that Allan was "having one of those days" I did not press an interview on him but maintained a bank of questions for future reference.

I became aware of the need to cross reference my observations and interviews of Allan with interviews of other groups in the school. This I felt would help me to see Allan's actions from a different perspective and might back up some of the strands of thought I was beginning to develop. Early in November I gained the necessary approval from Allan and set about the task. I was hampered by time constraints and so I was not able to carry out all the interviews that I would have liked but I deliberately waited until the second half of term because I wanted everyone to be more familiar with me. Lesko (1988) did not use random sampling techniques but chose her participants from two distinct groups. Likewise I made a distinction between those people who had been at the school before Allan arrived and those who had come since his appointment.

With these single contact interviews my aim was to reinforce the relationship that had been built up through previous informal conversations and put the participants at their ease. Having gained their permission to record the session I emphasized that our talk would be confidential, they could stop the interview at any time, and that the tape would be destroyed on completion of the thesis. Normally I started things off with some small talk. Then as I switched the tape recorder on I tried to diffuse any

tension by making some humourous comment about my lack of knowledge of those machines. My initial questions and probes concerned the general role of the principal and then I gradually moved the conversation towards the way Allan operated in the school. I usually ended by asking them what stories they might tell about Allan to a new teacher who they were showing around the school.

Gorden (1975) mentioned that one positive factor of single interviews was that the interviewer left the scene afterwards which was less threatening for the participant. That did not happen in my case because of the nature of the research and this did cause one of my participants some anxiety. I made sure that any fears were laid to rest by apologising for any worry caused and repeating that what was said was confidential and that my sources would remain anonymous. Furthermore I said that if I made use of the interview in the actual thesis it would be discretely handled. I took extra care to ensure that this situation did not happen again and eventually decided not to use that particular interview.

Questionnaires

To acquire student data to complement my observations I made use of the house system at St. David's. The houses consisted of between twenty and twenty-five students from each grade under the direction of one of the teachers. Rather like Wolcott (1979a) my idea was to ask a group of students to write something briefly and anonymously about the role of the principal.

I approached Phil Sergeant, one of the teacher advisers, told him what I proposed to do and got his consent to use some of the time set aside for house matters. Later at one of the meetings I explained to the students what I wanted to do and asked for their cooperation. I then gave them a letter to take home which provided their parents with a rough outline of my research, sought their permission to ask their children some questions, and gave them assurances of anonymity. At the next house meeting I distributed the two questions to those students who were willing to participate and who had the required approval. This exercise did provide me with some rich complementary data although if I had had more time I would have tried to interview all the students

concerned.

Examining Official Documents

The last source of data to be tapped was the collection of official documents. The material gathered included external communications, like parent newsletters and student handbooks, and internal documents, like announcements made over the public address system and minutes of various meetings (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982). As soon as I arrived I was provided with documentation readily available to prospective parents. When I expressed thanks and stated that I was keen to examine other documents much more material followed.

The language and descriptions contained in the documents gave me a better understanding of the milieu in which Allan operated. In addition there were some useful examples of how Allan communicated with the school's constituent groups as well as insights into his leadership style. I could also link what was stated in the documents with my observation of Allan in various settings and with what was said in our talks.

THE APPROACH TO RESEARCH

As researchers gain access and begin to gather data their actions and conduct are crucial to the success or failure of their investigations (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982; Burgess, 1985; Freilich, 1977). For example Freilich (1977) stated that "what he [or she] does in the field will tend either to attract or repel information" (p. 32). Treading very carefully seems to be the answer as the fieldworker enters the participant's world "not as a person who knows everything, but as a person who has come to learn; not as a person who wants to be like them, but as a person who wants to know what it is like to be them" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982, p. 119). Researchers have therefore tried to cultivate certain styles in order to acquire a steady stream of reliable and trustworthy data.

King (1984), Lesko (1988), Metz (1978), and Wolcott (1979a) all favoured a neutral and non-judgemental approach and in addition, Delamont (1984) and King (1984) stressed the importance of politeness. A sympathetic and understanding style was

recommended by Ball (1984), Hammersly (1984), King (1984), and Wolcott (1979a) and both Hammersly (1984) and Lesko (1988) thought that the researcher must be friendly. Flexibility may also be necessary and Ball (1984) mentioned that during his fieldwork he adopted different styles to suit different relationships. Metz (1978) said that her manner changed if controversial topics were brought up in the staffroom.

Armed with advice from some of these researchers and some well taught coursework on methodology I feel confident that my own conduct was sound. Early in my own fieldwork Allan introduced me to one of the newer teachers, Ian Curry, with the comment that at the end of term I would be writing a report that would show him how he was doing his job as principal. Although I felt that the statement was made mainly to allay Ian's fears I repeated politely that my first concern was to understand his role rather than evaluate his performance. My intention at St. David's was to give the impression that here was someone who would listen but not repeat conversations; someone who would be interested in what happened but not too involved; someone who would take things seriously but not lose his sense of humour.

This proved to be quite difficult because towards the end of term the relationship between the board and the teachers soured and everyone became more sensitive and defensive. Judith quietly asked me one day who would be reading my report and added that she was rather paranoid at that moment. I replied that Allan would review the material before it was formally submitted for defence since it was about his role in the school. I also emphasized that I had not been asked by any group to do research in the school and told her that I would not be revealing the name of the school or anybody associated with it. In fact within two weeks of starting I developed my own pseudonyms for everyone concerned and began to employ them in my fieldnotes. I have also altered any names unique to the operation of the school and in some passages have either not included titles held or courses taught by the participants or made alterations (Burgess, 1985).

DATA ANALYSIS

Prior to my study I knew that there would be a mass of data to sift through but I was still shell-shocked by the actual amount of information when the rains came. My first survival tactic was to index, number, and date everything as it arrived. So at the front of my files and folders I put the page number and a brief description of what I thought were the most striking comments, events, or stories.

The descriptions vary from the more involved, "P.27 - Relationship with Maggie, differing views...vocation v. job," to the straightforward, "P188 - Hierarchy," to the more offbeat, "P.85 - Of pine cones and biodegradable condoms." I also began to link in the interviews with the index to try to build a better picture of who said what, when and why.

This process helped me to stop pressing the panic button and gave me a chance to begin focusing, reducing, and selecting the data. (Miles & Huberman, 1984). Like Hammersly (1984) I found myself unable to keep abreast of the interview transcriptions that had to be made. Since I felt that it was necessary to have them to refer to and that my time could be used more productively I had some of them transcribed professionally.

Collection and Analysis Together

Bogdan and Biklen (1982) emphasized that data collection should be accompanied by data analysis to give it direction. They recommended that the researcher should ask questions grounded in previous observations, make comments related to their observations, use themes and metaphors, and start to examine the relevant literature.

The questions I related to previous observations usually took the form of, "You talked to Kate about . . . Can you elaborate?" or, "Can you tell me about the background to . . . " or even, "In your talk with Rachel I got the impression that . . . Is this correct?" With this process I was able to triangulate (Owens, 1987) data that I considered significant, sharpen my focus, and ask further probing questions. Tiny threads of research were thus woven together.

When writing up my observations I left a portion of the page

for my own comments, notes, and reminders. These ranged from one word entries like "ask", to short sentences like "Allan's thrust here seems to be bridge building", and to paragraphs like,

> He is obviously at ease with the students as he moves around in a confident manner and talks easily with them. Their replies are not monosyllabic and they look at him. He is not afraid to pat them on the back.

My comments enabled me to reflect on what had happened and subsequent events or conversations could give me a feeling of deja vu and so reinforce my nascent ideas. For instance the idea of Allan building bridges to and between the various constituencies grew stronger as the term progressed. On two occasions Allan said that developing relationships had been a major objective of his in the first year. As the tension between the faculty and the board mounted it seemed to me that mending those bridges became urgent for him. So comments became themes and themes led to more comments. In hindsight, however, I accept Bogdan and Biklen's (1982) criticism that during the first pieces of research not enough time is spent in reflection. I felt it was important to make legible copies of my fieldnotes before I forgot what had happened and in the rush comments and speculation took a back seat, which was a mistake.

Gradually I became more comfortable with the demands of fieldwork and was able to use my time a bit more flexibly. I slowly began to examine more articles and books on organizational culture, private denominational schools, and the principal's role. This reading sometimes brought on intuitive leaps with feelings like this could be the cause of that, or that could be going on there, or even this would explain that. To cope with the way readings may blinker thought processes (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982) I formed questions from them and when I could I tested them in interviews with Allan.

Analysis by Code

Hammersly (1984) suggested that the process of analysing data was a "long and winding road" (p. 57) and this has been my experience also as I accepted a part time teaching position soon

after finishing my data collection. On reflection this delay has been positive as some of the data collected were very sensitive and both Burgess (1985) and King (1984) advocated allowing time to elapse in this situation.

My first step on this particular journey was to read the data over and over again (Delamont, 1984) to try and establish coding categories (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982). I used a diocesan document which divided the principal's role into educational leader, spiritual and moral leader, and school manager and highlighted what I considered to be the appropriate passages. Yellow, green, and purple marker pens symbolized the educational, spiritual, and managerial roles. I also decided to use three additional colours; orange signified the way I gained access and acceptance, red dealt with Allan's relationships, and blue outlined his personal characteristics. This proved to be unsatisfactory as many of Allan's actions could be highlighted in more than one colour and I did not want to make these notes undecipherable !

In my first attempt I noticed that Allan's role could be defined in terms of providing tone, cohesion, and direction for the school and I persevered with them in the second effort. In the middle of three separate pieces of paper I wrote these themes and as I read through the text I jotted down significant phrases and their references round these ideas. For example my observation of Allan talking favourably to board members and other administrators about Judith and Mary's workshop was linked to building cohesion in the school. This method of display by using networks and charts (Miles & Huberman, 1984) also proved to be a cul de sac as again the three themes overlapped to a high degree.

As I sifted and reread the material I began to see Allan's expectations for other groups and his efforts to bind them all together as a solution to this problem. In this scenario Allan's actions could be viewed in terms of a spider weaving a web; joining the branches of a tree together with strong and almost invisible threads for a specific purpose. Geertz's (1973) metaphor of a web, the drawing of a web on the paperback cover of Lightfoot's (1983) book, and my own observations of a spider in our garden crystallized this imagery. While examining the data I wrote on different sheets of paper the phrases and references pertinent to Allan's dealings with the various school groups. Next

I studied these charts and found a phrase that seemed to capture the essence of what Allan expected from the particular group and started to make a neat copy of that chart. I linked his expectations with the actions he carried out to reinforce them, wrote down the ways he tried to bind groups together, and finished up with my own web!

For example Allan's message to the parents was encapsulated in his comment to me that parental involvement was "not just selling hot dogs and stuff." During my fieldwork he worked to boost parental involvement by telling them about their importance in this community, urging them to become more involved, and trying to make them empathize with other school groups.

ETHNOGRAPHY OR ROLE STUDY?

Wolcott (1979a) argued that his study was "ethnographic to the extent that the principal who provide[d] the focus of it [was] seen as an interacting member of a cultural system" (p. 380). Certainly my portrayal of Allan is as a leading member of a cultural milieu but I feel that it would be presumptuous of me to regard this study as ethnographic.

I entered the world of St. David's with the frame of a research design and knew what techniques I would use to collect my data. However, beyond that my approach was open-ended (Everhardt, 1979) as I did not have a clear picture of who or what all my sources would be and I had little idea of the shape of the analysis other than a belief that an overarching theme would emerge (Hammersly, 1984). I used a variety of techniques and maintained rapport with my participants to grasp then present the complex and interwoven cultural themes that I beheld (Geertz, 1973). I began to understand what was behind Allan's gestures (Wax, 1971) and got a feel for the ambience of St. David's (Peshkin, 1982) although I acknowledge Smith's (1981) point that "it takes one (a Catholic) to know one (a Catholic school)" (p. 70). As a result I have been able to produce a detailed and rich cultural picture (Everhardt, 1979; Geertz, 1973; Wolcott, 1985).

However, ethnography is also concerned with the whole way of life of the participants (King, 1984; Peshkin, 1982). I did not follow Wolcott's (1979a) prescription and so did not accompany

Allan to service club luncheons or family weddings. Nor did I observe him in settings like his home and his church. Both Peshkin (1982) and Wolcott (1985) have argued that the length of time spent in the field is a necessary ethnographic ingredient. Wolcott (1985) added that twelve months in the field was the unwritten but generally accepted minimum. In this light I hesitate before calling this research an ethnography and prefer to call it a role study with some ethnographic overtones.

Chapter 4

WEAVING, STRENGTHENING, JOINING, AND MENDING

With the route of my methodological journey traced out I can now begin to interpret what I saw, listened to, and read. I have divided this chapter into six parts which relate to the constituencies at St. David's. They are: the administrative team, the students, the teachers, the board, the parents, and the neighbourhood. In each section I have started by looking at how Allan used his expectations to weave a relationship with the group and how he strengthened the bond. Then I have considered how he joined up that group to others and how he tried to mend damaged relationships.

WHEN YOU TWO BOYS HAVE FINISHED FIGHTING

The school office was at the centre of this web. Here Penny Foster and Sue Whitfield, the administrative assistants, worked while the adjacent rooms were used by Allan, Bruce, and Marian Coates, the school accountant. It was a blur of activity during the school day as at various times it doubled as a Canada Post sorting room, an army operations theatre, a psychiatrist's clinic, and a casualty ward. "Welcome to the madhouse," Allan grinned to me one morning as I arrived at 8.30am to find a boy lying there on a stretcher with three paramedics in attendance!

Having the school office at the hub of things suited Allan's purpose for it deflected attention away from the classroom and allowed schooling to continue unhindered. Once he reminisced about his years as a teacher and remarked:

> I guess what I saw in the administrators was that they weren't on my back. They weren't interfering in what I was doing. They knew I was doing a job in the classroom and if there was a problem they'd sure as heck find out about it and I would hear from them. I realized the guy in the office knew what he was doing as he was the one that kept the thing moving. I feel the same way now, as I told the staff that one of the goals Bruce and I have is to be able to give them uninterupted quality time with their students.

Allan also had recent school history to remind him what could happen to the school atmosphere if the office was bypassed. As he told me:

> This is where a lot of problems were happening. People weren't talking to each other. They were bypassing the administration and going directly to the board. The board was coming back to the teachers and then the teachers would come and bitch to the principal and he would wonder what was going on and where it came from . . . It was just horrible, apparently it was awful.

As a result Allan said that the first time he had board and staff meetings he asked them to follow certain directives about communication. Above all if they had any concerns about the school or the people in it they were to see him first. He saw his role in terms of a link or support for as he put it, "You're right in the middle, you're in between all these people, and you know if they start going around talking to each other you're in no man's land." Penny expressed the same sentiments though in a different light:

> It's actually fun to be in this support staff role because you get to see so many facets. You have to be both a mum and a baby sitter. You are working for many teachers, for the administrators, and for the school board so it is a really different type of job.

In this setting cultural information was received, shared, and dispensed. To focus his administrative team Allan blended a number of different strategies. He developed relationships, told and repeated anecdotes, discussed policies, and tried to link them with the other school groups. Central to these strategies was his idea that the administrative team was the pivot of the system at St. David's.

A Tightly-Knit Team

The relationship between the administrative staff was cordial and Allan was held in high regard. Penny mentioned to me that he did not always tell her what he wanted which sometimes led to a last minute scramble. However, she admired his calmness

under pressure, his willingness to listen to people, and his ability to reconcile opposing points of view. She trusted him enough to say, "I know that whenever I've had problems I go to him personally." She talked about his relationship with staff and students in a most positive way. She asserted, "He has been very good for the school in many ways and has brought the staff closer together than they were perhaps last year. They have far more unity now." Concerning the students she remarked that:

> His laid back personality . . . is very important in the school, especially with high school students. The students find they can get to him and they will get to him. If they realize that he is a very calm individual they will feel a little more confident about going to him if they have a problem.

Bruce also recognized Allan's abilities in an early discussion about a thorny timetabling problem that might have meant one teacher losing her senior class. Allan told Bruce that he would see Deb and Pete, present the facts, and ask them what they thought could be done to ease the situation. Bruce's comment was, "You can present it that way, Allan, because you're diplomatic." When I asked Allan in a later interview about the division of administrative responsibilities he told me that Bruce had asked him specifically to deal with individual personnel concerns.

A close working relationship was also fostered as Allan was ready to listen to the administrative staff. Penny, for instance, asked if she could sit with him for ten minutes and expressed concern about the student activity fund that she was responsible for. She wanted to be reimbursed periodically so that the fund did not dry up and wanted to know whether she would still be responsible for it in view of the new and tighter financial policy of the board. Allan agreed that she should know where she stood, found Marian, and relayed the message back that she would still be in charge of it and should see her when the fund needed topping up.

He also proved that he was willing to help the administrative staff out. When a telephone call came through from the gym to say that Bruce's son had dislocated his finger Allan went down there, assessed the situation, and then found Bruce. While Bruce took his son to the hospital Allan covered his religious education class for him. Sue came to see him as she was unsure about going to a course on computer applications since it would take two days.

Allan said that he was pleased that she wanted to attend for it would be useful in-service training and told her not to worry about those two days for she would not be penalised.

Small tokens such as chocolates were bought for them which helped to sweeten the relationship. On one occasion he said to Penny and Sue, "I hope this will pep up your day," and on another he said to Marian, "I thought we needed an early Christmas."

Humour permeated the developing relationships and helped to build a sense of camaraderie. When he caught Penny kneeling at the spare typewriter Allan smiled and made a joke about the religious nature of the school! Later that morning when he asked her to do some typing she quipped, "Here we go on my knees again!" After a telephone conversation with Pierre Dumont, one of the board members, Allan heard talking in the office. He looked out of the door and saw Sue. She explained that she was just talking to herself and laughed at his rejoinder, "You know what they say, you couldn't talk to a nicer person!"

These emerging relationships were not one-sided affairs though. Sue commiserated with him when she saw that he was taking work home for the weekend and he remarked that he would be lucky if he got through a quarter of it. When Allan complained to Bruce that Maggie Kenning was interfering, Bruce agreed with him and said that in his opinion a member of the board should go in and out of the school by way of the principal's office. He talked of the necessity of having a chain of command and Allan simmered down and said that he felt that Maggie was almost too enthusiastic.

Spinning That Yarn

The conversations and meetings between Allan and Bruce were often punctuated with humorous anecdotes and wisecracks. In one incident Allan and Bruce were discussing how the dress code about shoes should be implemented. Bruce had received a letter from a parent stating that students should be allowed to wear black running shoes and he wanted to reply firmly to it. Allan's reaction was that they should not be allowed to wear them but that they should not make an issue out of it. The discussion then disintegrated into a series of witty exchanges about footwear and

the dress code in general and ended with Sue looking in and saying, "When you two boys have finished fighting!"

In one of their many conversations about infractions of school rules Allan and Bruce started to reminisce. "Oh God, I remember that one!" Allan groaned when Bruce mentioned the Ray Cooper case that occurred the previous term. While I conducted my fieldwork there were several incidents that I am sure would attain war story or mythic status for them later on.

One episode, which showed the fragility of this organizational web, involved the terms of employment for Father Pat, who had started to teach religious education to a grade eight class. While nobody objected to the appointment the procedure was questioned. Allan informed me that he took the initiative himself following a discussion with Father Pat about the religious education programme at St. David's. This touched other nerves since he admitted that Maggie should have been consulted. He thought that an added worry for her was the delicate stage that the teachers' salary negotiations had reached but said that the teachers did not view this as a problem. In one of many conversations with Bruce about it he said that it was a storm in a teacup and that Maggie had stirred things up unnecessarily by questioning his judgment. He reckoned that Father Pat was doing a good job, was enjoying it, and was a real asset for the school. Then he declared that a Catholic school should have the right to employ a Catholic priest to teach religion. Bruce sympathized and on one occasion said, "Now the board have a principal that they can trust they should get on and do it."

Another incident demonstrated the division of responsibility among the administrative staff and concerned a typed letter that a student, Brad, had put on the notice board following a classroom outburst. In it he decried his lack of freedom to express his opinion, called certain teachers "Commies," and ended by stating that this letter would probably get him into trouble. Paul, the head of the religious education programme and a senior administrator, took the letter down and brought it to Allan before the start of classes. They discussed the contents of the letter and the action that could be taken to minimize the impact. Although Allan fielded a parental telephone call later that morning about it he decided that Bruce should deal with the incident since he was in

charge of disciplinary matters. He joked to me that he should not let Bruce deal with Brad as he would probably agree with Brad's comments!

Some stories that Allan told about his past experiences showed the administrative staff that he was human, served to strengthen the bonds between them, and provided them with insight. When Allan, Bruce, and Sue spoke about having an intercom in the laboratories as a safety measure he told them two stories. The first concerned a teacher he knew who ripped the wires out of the wall so that his classes would not be disturbed any more. The second was about how he had found the system invaluable when two of his students had squared up for a fight and he knew that he could not stop them. The question about the intercom was not resolved as the bell went but we all smiled at his stories.

Discussion of Policy

Although Allan's door was usually open the more sensitive matters of school policy were discussed with the door closed. When the music teacher had to resign in the middle of September because of recurring illness Beth was hired as his successor. Soon after she started four members of the choir class began to disrupt the proceedings. She told her head of department and had a frank discussion with Allan at the end of October. Things did not improve and in November Allan and Bruce talked about the issue. Bruce mentioned that the standard policy measures had been adopted with the four boys often doing work in the library during that class. He added that from his observation of Beth's class this procedure had made a difference although Beth was a good teacher anyway, something that they should emphasize to her. Allan's first suggestion was that they should begin to reintroduce the students individually and said that in his opinion the problem hinged on a lack of option choices for those students as well as their own immaturity. He then said that if there was any more trouble they should be ejected from the class and given some heavy assignments which might lead to a credit in that course. They decided that Bruce would present this scenario to the four students and they would make a final decision based on those interviews.

The next day Bruce told Allan that in his opinion the written assignments would be the best option even though he had some misgivings. Allan replied that he would still like to keep options open but Bruce felt that at this stage there was nothing to be gained by this. However, they decided on a little flexibility as when Bruce met with one boy's father he told him that Darryl could go back into class only if Beth and Emma, the school counsellor, agreed. The matter ended with the students doing the written work in the library.

With policy matters the red school handbook was often used as a benchmark. It contained a specific reference to major breaches of discipline:

> A serious infraction is immediately referred to the Vice-Principal who will coordinate remedial action and contact the parents. At this level of correction remedial action may include a brief suspension. Serious infractions include unexcused absence from school or from a class, theft, personal violence, (or harassment), possession or use of alcohol or illicit drugs, vandalism, possession of a weapon or deliberate insolence.

After Dan brought a couple of boys into the office for fighting Allan and Bruce listened to their story and reviewed the incident. Bruce said that Ryan had been in trouble before but not for fighting and Allan asked him what he had done in similar cases and what the red book stated. Bruce replied that he had usually given up to five thousand lines at which point Allan stated that he wanted an "In-house" suspension as they had to be seen to act in a case like this. Bruce agreed that there was an element of viciousness involved and said the punishment was fitting.

Their Supportive Role

In these policy discussions and in more informal chats Allan tried to tell Bruce how he thought an administrator should act to smooth the way for teaching. He told me that he was a little concerned about Bruce's relationship with some of the faculty members since it was "hard for him sometimes to see the grey area," and he was liable to "blow his stack." However he did feel that the situation was improving for Bruce recognized these tendencies and did apologize quickly. In his view this sort of issue

was best approached over an informal drink on Friday afternoon. As he said:

> When we're sitting there and more relaxed then we're talking to each other as friends. I might say to him that if he wants to continue on in administration there are a couple of things he has to be aware of and he accepts it very well.

The administrative team shared their various war stories about the other school groups but Allan often reminded them of their central supportive role in conversations. One of the board members, Bernie Montgomery, was trying to reorganize the budget and so Allan had many talks with Marian about accounting codes, zero-based budgeting, and budgetary requirements for department heads. In preparation for the mid September board meeting Allan and Marian reviewed the budget breakdown. He said that they should give Bernie as much information and help as they could but many things had not been finalized yet. Anyway Bruce and Marian would also be at the meeting so between them they could cover the bases. He told Marian that the new budgetary requirements were a learning process for all the staff but they saw the need for it and would soon be familiar with it.

While examining the office budget in September with Penny and Sue Allan stressed that Bernie's requirements should not be seen as a check on them as he certainly figured that they knew what they were doing. Since Bernie was the new treasurer he naturally wanted some sort of breakdown and it was good practice as it would make them all more responsible. He added that he could certainly see where Bernie was coming from.

In conversations with Bruce, Allan often told him that he thought some teacher or other was doing a great job. He said, for instance, that he was excited by Ian's use of Father Pat as a guest speaker in a class on bioethics and would like to see someone like Phil come into Bruce's religion class to talk about the scientific view of creation. When one of the department heads, Julie, left after a meeting on teacher accountability he said to Bruce that he thought she was a great asset to the school. He added that he felt he knew where she was coming from in that she also believed teachers should not send students to the office for every misdemeanour.

I asked Allan what message he was trying to give Bruce when he told him that he thought Rick Lees, the janitor, was doing a great job of polishing. He replied, "I think what it says to Bruce is, you're right it did mean an extra guy. You picked the right one and he is doing a damn good job." He added that he hoped Bruce would pass the message on:

> Bruce, I think, will say it. I'm sure he will, but I don't know whether it is something he would just naturally come out and say. Do you remember I was telling you about the complimentary cards to teachers ? I gave a stack to Bruce and said that he should be handing out some of these too. I think with teachers they need to hear him say, "Hey, you are doing a good job," because all they see now and all they've received is negative stuff; discipline procedures and so on. Yet they all know that he counsels individual teachers, parents, and students very well.

Summary

In the middle of the web Allan and his administrative team worked so that the teaching and learning process could proceed unimpeded. Routine was established, disciplinary policy was hammered out, budgets were scrutinized, absences were noted, and personnel matters were dealt with. Amidst telephone calls, yellow, 'post-it' messages, and frenetic meetings they retained their sense of humour and shared many jokes. Allan, himself, formed them into a team and reminded them that other school groups were working for the same goals and needed their support.

SITTING THERE LIKE A BUMP ON A LOG

Allan was enthusiastic about the provincial educational changes designed to implement a new curriculum. He said to me that it was his firm conviction students should be encouraged to ask questions and act more responsibly rather than just "sitting there like a bump on a log." In an article for the local newspaper he wrote that his wholehearted endorsement of these changes stemmed from experience gained at Campagnola School, St. Louis. When talking to me about students at that school he commented:

> They had experienced the atmosphere of independent learning. They were given

intellectual challenges, allowed to make independent decisions, and encouraged to accept the self-discipline required to succeed at college or on the job.

Being Accessible

He certainly wanted teachers to foster independent learning in the classroom and felt that he had a leading role to play in promoting this independence of mind. His own efforts to make pupils get off their respective logs usually took place in various rooms around the school, at assemblies, and on the playing field. Unfettered by more academic confines he could be seen and heard in many places and was accessible to students.

His point to me was that being out there trying to remember students' names and something about them let them know that he was not "some great ogre" and was interested in them as people. Evidence showed that this was indeed important as one pupil wrote that the role of a principal was "to be a friend of the students." Another included "to be understanding and talk to the students too" in the description. In this kind of a climate he could present his expectations to them, issue challenges or give them jobs, encourage or deter them, and try to help them understand what others were doing for them.

In a 'low-key' way his tours around the school allowed students to have a glimpse of his personality. He might for instance show that he could laugh at himself. "Bonjour." said a senior girl as we walked by on just such a tour. "Ca va?" replied Allan. "Ca va bien merci!" she responded at once. "Hold on, that's it!" he said laughing. He might also compliment students on their appearance. "Is that a new haircut?" he once asked a boy standing with a group by the lockers. "Yeah," he acknowledged. "Look's sharp!" Allan said and the boy smiled. On yet another occasion he might poke fun at students. "What are you doing selling socks?" he asked the students in the school store. "What kind of junk are you selling?" he continued with a twinkle in his eye. "The one thing I want you haven't got!" he concluded in mock exasperation.

This enabled students to approach him and seek his help. Carla, accompanied by Darren, asked him if he could do something about the graffiti written about her in the boys washroom. He listened to her concerns, stated that he would check the washroom

and found two personal comments on an otherwise clean wall. Later he found Bob, the janitor, who said that he would deal with it.

On two occasions Allan stressed his 'open door policy' to grade twelve students and I observed one incident when use was made of this guarantee. One afternoon before a scheduled parental meeting Anne and her friend Natalie knocked on his office door frame and looked in inquiringly. He ushered them in, motioned for them to sit in the comfier chairs, and listened to Natalie pouring out her story. In a voice near to breaking she told him of the harassment she was receiving from a group of grade twelve students that included her ex-boyfriend and how the abuse was spreading to her friends like Anne.

During her story Allan did not interrupt her or hurry them even when the parents arrived for their appointment. He quietly asked questions when she had finished and then spoke gently about some possible solutions. He said that he could talk to Natalie's ex-boyfriend or to Anne and one of the less active harassers but also emphasized that he would like them to think of a solution. As they left he looked at her, said "Head up!" and she lifted her head up and smiled. I asked Allan later what the outcome had been and he said that he had had a chat with Bill, Natalie's ex-boyfriend. He also said that that he had talked with Natalie since then and she was feeling better as things had calmed down.

Presenting his Expectations

Whether he was in the hallway mixing with students, speaking to them over the public address system, or talking to them in a formal assembly Allan often presented his expectations for their conduct. He painted the picture for the school at the first assembly by telling them that rules were necessary to ensure safety, because they were laws of the land, and for any community to function. Hence attendance at school was a legal requirement, gym supervision was a matter of safety, and wearing a uniform showed that they were part of a community. One of the student's I surveyed wrote, "The principal in our school acts as "God" in that he is the one who draws the final line on what students can or cannot do." Thus if he saw a student dropping a candy wrapper on

the corridor floor he might state firmly, "You'll not only pick it up, you'll also pick all the stuff off the floor!" Also while standing at the front of the gym he might call to a student wandering off up the street, "It's too late for a smoke break!"

He also got his message across in a more humourous way. On a rainy November day Allan agreed to take Paul's Religious Studies class. He arrived at the class to find Dave with his hat on. "Hey, Dave, can you take off the hat?" he asked. "I have it to keep my hair from getting wet Mr. Greenlees." Dave responded without taking it off. "I know, I have the same problem," said Allan patting his thinning hairline. "What both of them!" replied Dave with a grin taking his hat off. "Yeah right!" said Allan smiling.

When informing the students about the proper way to act he often tried to put his remarks in a positive perspective. One example was his morning announcement after a late-October telephone call from the police. In the address he declared that although the students' behaviour had been generally good the police had informed him that someone had been throwing firecrackers. He went on to remind everyone that possessing firecrackers was illegal and if they were caught with them they were liable to be charged.

He adopted the same formula in an assembly I observed. He started by saying that the conduct of the school had been good and they could regard it as a pat on the back. He then said that although behaviour at school dances was fine and he had enjoyed them he was concerned that alcohol had been used at the last dance. During his last remarks there was some muffled laughter and Allan's retort was "I don't know what that means" followed by a harder-toned reminder that alcohol possession would result in suspension. His parting comment was that students should enjoy themselves but they should not break the rules.

For grade twelve students one expectation was that they should take more responsibility for their own academic progress. The minutes of the staff meeting in early December showed that:

> Concern was expressed about grade twelve students abusing study privileges . . . and Mr. Greenlees will visit both grade twelve classes during their English class on Friday to emphasize their responsibilities.

The thrust of Allan's argument to those classes about the

"spare periods" was:

> We aren't doing our job if we treat you like grade nines...Our responsibility is to help you with the next step; college . . . You need to use study time well in preparation . . . You are not going to be held by the hand there . . . At the staff meeting concern was voiced about grade twelves not using study time well . . . You must handle these things yourselves as there should not be a teacher in [your study room].

Allan then fielded questions and comments from them. These ranged from a comment that everyone blamed the grade twelves, to a concern that peer counsellors used the same room. Allan said that he would clarify the use that was being made of the room and mentioned that he did feel positive about what was happening in the school and he thought they should know that.

Issuing Challenges and Providing Jobs

Issuing challenges was a method Allan used to encourage student accountability. He informed the grade twelve students that while he did not expect them to be a police force he did expect them to take responsibility for the school's environment. The garbage throwing incident, for example, allowed Allan to ask members of the school council what they were going to do about it. It also provided him with an ideal anecdote which he recounted in our initial interview and which was repeated in the first school assembly and to the grade twelve student group. He had received a polite letter from a local apartment block manager, the previous term, suggesting that St. David's students were throwing garbage on their lawn. He answered this letter but also passed it on to the president of the School Council and asked him what action the Council members were going to take. They decided to organize a group of students to clean up the area in question.

Allan spoke more about challenging students to take action in another interview:

> In some instances I've asked Brad and Katy to go down to speak to the officials at Brendan Nature Reserve. I've asked them to go and talk to them so they hear what I hear; that we do have a responsibility to make kids aware of their conduct. I want them to see that it's part of their role too.

Just after Halloween I witnessed a situation in which Allan

delivered the same message but was less successful at encouraging independent student action. He received a complaint about students messing up a nearby street by bursting pumpkins. He inspected the street and then called Brad, the current School Council president, and asked him what was going to be done about it. Brad made it clear that he was busy organizing the school dance, that students were now going home, and casually mentioned that pumpkins were biodegradable. Allan then proposed that Brad should gather a group of students together, drive them up to the street, and clean up the mess as it would not take much time. Brad tried without success to organize a group so Allan collected some black plastic garbage bags, explained the situation to a small group of students in the hallway, and received two volunteers. I offered to drive them and five of us went to Ridgeway Crescent. Allan explained to Brad and the two others that the residents might again regard St. David's students as good neighbours because of their action. He pointed out to Brad in particular that if something like this is done the problem has to be addressed. Back at St. David's Allan thanked them and once again emphasized the importance of being good and responsible neighbours.

As well as challenging students to take the responsible action Allan often gave them jobs to do. "I like to have a kid doing things even if it's just something small," he informed me on one occasion. When I asked him if it was done to build up their self-esteem Allan replied, "I just like to get kids involved. They feel like they're doing something for you and the school and I feel that's important."

Typically Allan's job searches began with a visit to the art department. On his quest to find a student willing to work on some name tags he walked quietly into the art room and told Louise, "I need to set a task for someone," when he had her attention. "Could someone put names on these?" he continued pointing at the badges in his hand. "Mary Chou can do calligraphy," she replied, "she's really good at that!" Mary arrived at Allan's office at the break. Allan completed his telephone call and asked, "Oh! Mary are you going to a class right now?" "I've got French next block," she responded. He then said, "You don't have to do it right away as I need it for tomorrow evening. What I want is these ten names on white circles like this and then put in these

badges. Have you got any free periods today?" No," she replied, "But I can do it at lunch." "Do you want to pick up the stuff then?" he inquired. "I can take it right now and put it in my locker," she said picking up the badges, white circles of card, and list of names. "Thanks Mary!" he concluded and she smiled and left his office. On my return after lunch he told me that Mary had already completed them. I admired her work and Allan remarked that he was very pleased with it too. Allan also used student input for the design of a new school brochure. One morning he found Stephen and they sat down together at a table in the foyer outside the library. While Stephen ate his sandwiches Allan told him about the proposal for the new brochure and said that he wanted him to do the photography and the front page layout. Allan showed him some samples from other private schools and said that he wanted the brochure to tell readers what was happening at St. David's. Stephen looked at the samples and commented that a front cover with a pencil drawing of students would be an eye-catcher. Then Allan told him to do what he thought was best and said that he would leave the brochures with him. They chatted about the photographs to be taken and the printing process and Allan finished by saying that he would like Stephen and someone else to get started as soon as possible.

Enforcing the Rules and Patting Them on the Back

In forging this link with the student body rules were enforced to support the tone set for this relationship and expectations regarding conduct. The school handbook stated that the maintenance of discipline in the school was one of Bruce's responsibilities. Allan said the same thing to me but also stressed that it should be everyone's concern.

Punctuality, Allan thought, was an important life skill and as such had to be reinforced. So, when he heard Bruce and Penny discussing late arrivals he declared, "Are you going to look after those 'lates' Bruce? Oh good, we want to nail the chronics!" He explained this reasoning to me:

> If they were late three times a week at their job, they might lose it. We can't fire them here, but we can give them detention. A lot of it here is not to get on

their backs; that is the last thing we want to do. We have to do it to help them train for what we perceive are the skills they will need.

He did help to hammer the lessons home. Announcements about punctuality were made periodically over the public address system and he could often be heard in the hallway hurrying the latecomers to class. "You're late to class already Julie!" he might call. "I'm waiting for my friend!" could be the response which he might counter by saying, "She knows where to go, hurry along!" He also informed 'chronics' like Dan and Ed that he knew about the number of times they had been late and sanctioned their detention.

When lateness and absence were the result of domestic and social upheavals, as faced by Jill, Allan took a more flexible line. He listened as she told him about leaving home and her subsequent appointments with the doctor and found out more about her relationship with her family. Then he warned her of the legal implications of missing school and also explained that her attitude towards teachers and office staff dealing with the problem was unacceptable. Lastly, he added, "We are willing to continue to work with you and won't just kick you out since we want to help you." Later he talked to me of his aim to provide understanding and empathy in cases like this and to send the message, "Let's pick up the blocks and begin to build again!"

From the beginning of term the uniform proved to be a festering issue and something of a trap for Allan. While he felt that a relaxing of the dress code would be appropriate the uniform itself did not bother him. He could understand the students who hated uniforms but he did not want to be seen to have double standards. Early in the term Bruce mentioned that the wrong sort of footwear was being worn and this would have to be nipped in the bud. This prompted Allan to remind the school in his morning announcements that black running shoes were not allowed and everyone must wear the prescribed footwear.

Later on he informed the grade twelve students that they were an example to the others and should not have to be reminded to dress properly. As he put it, "We're either going to have uniforms or we're not and what I want to see is consistency and fairness." He followed that by stating that after Monday the regulations would be enforced. Through the term he used

compliments like, "Hey Jody! You're looking smart today," to those people whom he thought were well dressed. To those he thought were breaking the rules, however, he issued orders like, "I want a doctor's note for your shoes, I don't buy it!"

He could laugh at the issue. When I remarked at the casual way two students had accepted his warning that another uniform violation would mean detention he grinned and said that they would probably accept detention in the same manner. Before 'Civvies day,' when the uniform rules were waived he teased a group of girls that they would probably spend most of the evening on the telephone trying to decide what to wear. They smiled, nodded in agreement, and one girl said that uniforms were so much more simple.

It was also featured on the only occasion that I saw Allan really lose his temper. Returning to his office one day he observed, Don, a grade twelve student, walking towards the gym door with white trainers on. He called Don over and demanded to know what he was doing and why he was wearing trainers. Don's brusque rejoinder was that he was going home, he had a 'spare' period, and he could not drive in his black shoes. At this Allan shouted, "You know the rules!" and Don hurled back, "Why are you 'spazzing' at me?" Allan turned his back and shouted at Don to come to his office. Once there he told him to change immediately and if he contravened regulations again he really would be going home.

After Don had left Allan said to me that he could not stand grade twelve students doing that, as they were supposed to set an example. He added, as he simmered down, that he would catch Don later and apologise for yelling at him. He told me in the afternoon:

> He came by at lunchtime and I was about to start first but he said, "I'm sorry I didn't mean to react the way I did." I said, "Don, I didn't either. I don't usually yell like that." He replied, "Yeah! you don't usually do that at all." I went on to say, "I guess I was just 'teed off' by the uniform thing and you just happened to be there. I've had to tell a number of students about uniform violations recently and I guess it got to me." I told him that other things were on my mind as well and what concerned me was that he is a grade twelve student and a role model. He said, "I understand, I'm sorry."

In an interesting aside to this story he referred to the

incident when reprimanding Shiela about her surly attitude towards one of the teachers. In suggesting that her apology should be sincere he said that he had chewed out a boy the other day over dress. He felt that he had been too heavy-handed about it so he had apologised at lunchtime and so had the student.

Incidents involving intimidation or violence made Allan angry and a typical reaction was his statement to Bruce, "I'd like you to get on to those damn kids, I hate that kind of thing!" Another time he mentioned to him that they had to be seen to act in cases like this.

When Anne broke up a fight and came to Allan with three students in tow she asked if she could leave things in his hands since she had to go and teach. Allan said she could and immediately began to find out what had happened. He started with Jamie who explained that he made a comment about Jean; something which Jean confirmed. She continued and said that Bill had intervened and started to fight him. After some hesitation Bill admitted to this and Allan sent him down to the office. He then asked Jean if she was offended by Jamie's remark and she said it was no big deal. He then sent Jamie off to get an ice pack and found Bruce. They discussed the episode and Allan suggested an internal suspension would be appropriate. Bruce went to talk to Jamie and on his return agreed that it would be a fitting punishment.

The rules in the St. David's community were enforced but at the same time Allan wanted to emphasize the positive nature of the relationship and strengthen their sense of belonging. In an early interview Allan told me that to him patting kids on the back created a positive climate and was a powerful motivator. I found that it was a technique that he often used during the day. On one of his first lunchtime supervisions he expressed sympathy for the new students, the kids he said with worried frowns who walked into walls! As we turned the corner we passed by some junior students eating their lunch. Allan remarked that more tables were needed there and patted one boy on the shoulder with the words, "How's it going?" In reply he smiled and said, "Alright thanks!"

Another time when Allan was checking on the bell schedule a grade twelve student, Alison, told him of her concerns for a friend who had left the previous year. She said that she had invited her

friend, Mary, to school as a guest and had informed her that she would be able to speak to Allan "as a concerned principal as well as a friend." He listened and responded, "Okay, fine, just fine, you handled that really well." In a later conversation Allan expanded on this incident:

> It says something about these kids; they really care about each other. They aren't always aware of the family implications but they can be supportive and being an ear is just as important . . . I think that attitude is here quite strongly.

Allan employed the same 'back-patting' techniques in more formal contexts too. On a visit to an art class to get some students to make a stencil for the staff car park he admired a clay witch that was being made. He told the student concerned that he thought it was great and remarked that she had even given the witch the characteristic pimple on the end of her nose. He proceeded to tell Louise that he thought the witch was really well made and she looked pleased and agreed.

After morning prayers over the public address system in November Allan reminded the school that it was Michael Hill's last day at St. David's. He thanked Michael for the contribution that he had made to the school and wished him well at his next school in Boulder. He ended by asking everyone else to give him their best wishes if they saw him around the school.

Finally, at one assembly Allan paid tribute to the efforts of the basketball team who had come third in a recent tournament hosted at St. David's. To the accompaniment of cheering he called forward the individual members of the squad and their coach, Scott Matthews, to be congratulated by the rest of the school. Judith took their photograph and then Allan stated that he would also like to recognise the contribution of the students who had helped out at this all-day event. He invited them to stand in their places and receive the applause that was due to them for their efforts.

Telling Them What Others Were Doing on Their Behalf

As a web may be constructed to join two branches of a tree Allan sought to make the students aware of what was being done

for them by the teachers and engineer a more binding union. In the first assembly of the school year Allan reminded everyone that at the Commencement Service the teachers had been charged with the responsibility of caring for the students. This charge I felt was wound into the ritual of the apples and honey, which Allan described as an 'icebreaker.' Peter, the head of the Religious Education programme, introduced the ritual and the formal part of the assembly ended with Allan presenting apples dipped in honey to the faculty and the heads of houses presenting them to their students.

His messages in the school yearbook showed his emphasis on constructing a strong link between the students and their teachers. Allan wrote in the 1989/90 yearbook:

> I could not address the graduating class, however, without especially congratulating the teaching staff on the outstanding quality of their instruction and their commitment to the task of developing the whole person in the spirit of love.

His opening sentence in the 1990-1 edition expressed the same desire to have a strong and positive relationship between the two groups:

> As I walk through the halls of our school and as I visit classes, I am impressed with the dedication of your teachers and the sense of commitment evident in your behaviour throughout each school day.

Although many of the morning notices given out by Allan over the public address system came from teachers he effectively controlled this pipeline to the students. In those few minutes students were continually reminded that teachers were providing opportunities, organizing events, and caring for them. On the eighteenth of October one of the notices concerned a field trip abroad. Allan read out the notice which stated:

> If you are interested in travelling and would like to know more about Spain and Portugal then listen carefully. St. David's students will have the opportunity to travel to Spain and Portugal in the Spring Break. All interested students and staff are invited to an information meeting today at 12.20pm. in Room 127. See Miss Steckar if you have any questions about the trip.

A day later Allan read this message from Jane Hampton, the

librarian:

> Remember sleepovers? You told ghost stories and scared the wits out of each other. Now you can scare us all! Enter the spooky story contest and win a mysterious prize. For more details see Mrs. Hampton.

Allan was also concerned that the students should be reminded of and acknowledge the efforts of the ancillary staff. While we discussed the assembly at which the basketball players were applauded Allan talked of future assemblies of this type:

> I want to get the office staff, the custodial staff, and those people who are obviously behind the scenes and recognize them. Just so the students are aware of the fact that there are many other people at this school, who help to make it run and make things more comfortable . . . I think we have to make them realize that this is a community.

Allan was instrumental in having some student teachers placed at St. David's for their practicum course. He told the grade twelve students that these student teachers were the professionals of the future and should be treated as guests. He had the opportunity of ensuring that this happened when he took responsibility for one of them when the supervising teacher had to take a sudden leave of absence. Allan said to me that he thought Dave Vasseur had the potential to be a good teacher and he also put in a quiet word for him with some students. After one lesson he found Chris, Dana, and Kirsty by the lockers and told them that Dave was a good teacher and knew his subject. They nodded and he added that Dave was trying to show some of them that their problems stemmed from their confusion with the Mathematics involved. Later he chatted with Susan about the same lesson. "Do you understand what he's trying to do?" he asked. "Yes I do," she replied, "It's my Math!"

Controlling the Damage

As the relationship between the teachers and the board deteriorated Allan's task of binding the constituent groups together became more difficult. With the web of the school under more pressure he tried to minimize the disruption of the students'

routine with such actions as keeping the gym open during lunchtime. He commented to me during one supervision in the gym, "I think the atmosphere in the school and the staff-student relationship is pretty good. However," he added, "I think that they are slowly beginning to feel it though . . . as they do kind of pal around with each other."

When Blair and Jesse were reported to Allan for calling teachers "Commies" and loudly expressing their opinion that what the teachers were doing was wrong, Allan acted quickly to control the damage. He made the point to the two teachers, Chantal and Kate, that Blair was just getting on his bandwagon and the kids knew it. Later he called Blair into his office and listened to what he had to say. Blair's point was that some students were losing the extra sessions of help that teachers were giving after classes and this was affecting their results. Allan informed him that according to the terms of their contract the teachers did not have to this. He added that this did not mean that the teachers did not want to help but under the circumstances it was difficult for them to provide it. After a while Blair said that he saw Allan's point and then Allan said that while they both had concerns about the teachers' action the school day was not really interrupted.

Summary

Allan's hope was to provide a caring, Christian environment for the students so that they could begin to take responsibility, exercise self-discipline, and enter the world of work with a confidence born from security. He challenged, encouraged, and, when necessary, reprimanded them. They knew he was accessible, friendly, and would listen to them. That thread between them was woven fast but it was not something that could be left alone. It always needed to be watched, just as the thread between the students and teachers needed watching at the end of term.

I THINK THEY ARE PROFESSIONAL PEOPLE

Penny Foster once commented that Allan was "very careful about the staff feeling," and as I observed him at work I felt that he wanted to nurture it by establishing a creed of professionalism. He told me that his objective during his first year at St. David's had been to:

> Get that kind of communication going which is so important. The aim was to eliminate ill-feeling, build up the morale of the staff, and give them a pat on the back. The message was, "I'm going to treat you as an adult, as a professional teacher, I trust you."

During my fieldwork in the first term of his second year there I considered that this was still a priority for him. Through it he gave them a sense of what the word meant for him, worked to build a closer relationship with them, promoted staff professional development, and tried to get them to be professional in their relationships with other groups.

The Meaning of Professionalism

Professionalism implied a vocation and a code of conduct since he regarded "the teaching profession [as] the highest calling" and remarked about teachers, "I think they are professional people and I expect them to act in a responsible way." This responsibility involved teachers not losing sight of this calling, understanding that they were role models for the students, taking initiative and using their own judgment in their teaching, and seeking to share and learn more themselves.

Prayers during the informal 8.15am 'get together', before staff meetings, and at the professional development day served to remind them of their central goal. Allan recited the Lord's prayer to begin the professional development day and explained the significance of it to me:

> It is a traditional kind of thing but is saying to them that we are a unique kind of school and we feel that a prayer is helpful. It's a good way to set our sights and is not a major production, just a reminder of purpose since not just

> intellectualizing is done today. It also serves as a reminder of our role to help kids and gives staff an understanding of where they fit in the whole picture regarding their relationship with God.

The handbook that Allan and Bruce developed for the teachers left them in no doubt as to the importance of being an example for others to follow. It simply stated, "As models for students we are expected to conduct ourselves in such a manner as to promote the belief that God is with us at all times."

Whilst Allan wanted to "give to staff a certain sense of their responsibility and commitment," he told me he did not, "want them to feel that I have to be on their back all the time telling them to do this." He reacted favourably to staff taking the initiative and an example of this was his enthusiastic response to Judith Chisholm's request to have Mary Lee teaching her class the unit on "The Chrysalids." Her rationale which he applauded was that Mary was a very good teacher, the class had been taught by her already, and on Mary's suggestion the students had voted overwhelmingly for it. As we strolled down the corridor afterwards Allan smiled and told me that this was exactly the sort of thing he was trying to encourage. Kate Ingram, for instance, was pleased that Allan allowed them to use their own discretion as she noted, "People enjoy the freedom to be able to control their own little worlds." Alison Peter's point was that "it makes you feel valued, it makes you feel like a professional and you think that this guy trusts you to do your job in the classroom."

The importance of sharing and learning was emphasized at the first professional development day of the year. Allan had teachers from St. David's giving presentations on cooperative planning, cooperative learning, and computer applications. In his introduction to the day he told them, "There are people with expertise here so there is no need to look elsewhere" and added, "We can learn from each other and from our local experts." He enlarged on this at the next interview:

> The point was made that if you find a person who has some acceptance with the staff it's important for the staff to know that you have this person all the time. Here you have colleagues competent in some way, use them. If Judith has something going and you have a class on feel free to get me or Bruce to cover your period and go and observe . . . It says that we're all professionals and some have more skills than others but we're going to share them.

Allan also gave some indications about actions which in his opinion were not really professional. Before he came to St. David's the teachers formed themselves into a group and negotiated a contract with the board. He could see why the action was taken as he said, "If I've gotten all the facts it was necessary because the board at that time was completely unreasonable, just sort of scoffed at them and pushed them aside as if they were nothing." However, he felt that the group was now an anachronism and continued action on their part would not lead towards professionalism. He did not like the fact that a contract was being negotiated with the board and said to me, "I would much prefer that there wasn't employee contracts at all and then we could talk freely about what it means to be professional people." For him a contract meant regulating the hours of work and he felt this made no sense in the teaching profession. He explained more:

> This is why I have problems with unionism and I don't mean just here, I mean the public schools too. They are saying that they want to operate just like a real labour union, but want to be seen as a profession.

When contract negotiations stalled, a staff-board rift occurred, and old wounds were opened up, Allan was upset that the image of teachers as professionals was being harmed. At a meeting with Pete Munro, one of the group's spokespersons, he told him that what he feared would happen was happening . Misinformation and rumours were spreading, parents were finding out and were telephoning, and Bruce had been asked by one student if he was striking. Pete said that it was something that they had wanted to avoid and Allan replied that the staff meeting would be cancelled so that the teachers could meet and talk about the situation. Pete said they would and left the office and Allan sighed and sat there for a while without talking. A few days later while discussing teacher aides in science with Ernie Reid he told him that he was sick of the situation as teachers were getting blamed and he did not like the attitudes that were developing.

Strengthening the Link

As well as giving the teachers a sense of what he thought professionalism was and was not he attempted to build up a closer working relationship with the faculty by being accessible, listening carefully to them, and sharing information with selected individuals. The teacher's handbook stated that "every staff member should feel free to communicate with the principal on all matters concerning the school." Kate certainly thought this could happen because she said:

> I think, to me, that's been the most successful thing he's done in this school. He's said to teachers time and time and time again that the door is open. If they have a problem they should come and talk to him about it. They will work on it together, get the frustration out, bend that anger and then they can get on with the job.

Alison echoed this sentiment. When I asked her what sort of advice she would give to a new teacher she replied, "I would tell you that his door is open and he's always willing to listen and if you have any problems that is where you should go because I really believe that to be true." Richard Carter, however, put a different perspective on things as he commented,

> He certainly seems to be willing to listen. The only hitch with this is everybody has been willing to do that at this school. It can be, but is not necessarily, a positive tactic. It can be a stalling tactic too. However, he is certainly prepared to listen. I think he's got a lot of patience and tolerance probably with both faculty and students.

I observed Allan as he told the staff that he was willing to listen to them. Before one of the staff meetings Alison warned him that there had been some backbiting among some of the teachers and she thought that the solution might be more meetings. Allan was not keen on the idea as his feeling was that teachers had families too but he thanked her for her suggestion. At the meeting he told them that they had an important role to play in setting the agenda, he was happy to see staff, and hoped they felt comfortable enough to see him about their concerns rather than stew over and

gossip about them in the staff room.

If teachers were worried then Allan's remedy was to calm their fears by talking to them and trying to work out a solution with them. Alison remarked that:

> He's a calming person. He's calm, himself, which makes us calm. Sometimes it is frustrating because you might not see any action when you go to Allan with what you perceive as a crisis. You would almost like him to get a little excited as he listens to you but, nevertheless, it is calming.

At the start of term it looked like Deb Steckar would lose a class because of the small numbers in grade twelve. Bruce told Allan that she was upset by this and Allan said that he would have to meet with her, explain the situation, and then discuss what they could do to help her. A few days later Allan informed Bruce that he thought he had a solution, which meant dividing a physical education class between two teachers. He met Deb and Pete after lunch and told them he felt he had a solution which might require some compromises. He spoke of his idea to split up the grade twelve class between them and explained that Pete would get more preparation time, which he wanted, and Deb would not lose all her grade twelve teaching. Pete said that he thought it would work and they started to calculate how they would divide the class. Deb asked about lunchtime duties and Allan responded that they would be taken care of. He ended by thanking them for their forbearance and they both said they understood his dilemma about the relative weight of grade twelve courses.

Later on in the term Allan asked Deb how her classes were going and she mentioned that they had coped well with the situation and although some problems remained she was content. Allan reviewed this episode with me and stated that he was impressed by Deb as, "Last year she would have found that hard to handle,[but] this year she finds it easier." He thought that the key to this growth was that she was presented with the facts and a solution was found together.

Just as he was willing to listen he was also prepared to share information although he tried to do it on his own terms and worked on the 'need to know' principle. When talking about communication he stated:

> There are things that have to be out and everybody has to get the information, or whatever, but as much as possible I try to get messages out on an individual basis. I don't like to operate the other way unless I absolutely have to.

Allan told me that he "would like to have sat down with Maggie and Paul and come to an agreement about Father Pat's fees and say that's it." However, as the episode unfolded Father Pat told him that some staff members had approached him about his salary and the possibility of him joining the teacher's group. After hearing Father Pat's news, which he said he found uncomfortable, he shared the financial information with Alison and then Dan Fisher. Clasping his hands as he spoke he informed Dan that Father Pat would be paid for the class he was teaching according to the school salary scale. He reckoned that Father Pat's graduate degree qualified him to teach religious education but that was about it and said he would make sure that he got an independent school's teaching certificate to legitimize everything. Dan indicated that he was quite happy with what had been done.

He handled Dean Griffith's questioning by the police after a volleyball practice in much the same way. As he was talking to Bruce about it he heard Pete, the head of physical education, speaking to Sue and so he opened the door and said, "Pete, do you have a spare, it's important?" Pete had one during the second period and so Allan went down to the gym office at that time. He told Pete what had happened although Dean had actually talked to him just before he was taken away. They both expressed amazement and agreed that it was a shame since Dean was such a nice guy. Allan asked him to keep the event under his hat as he wanted to talk to Dean about the implications for his coaching and ended by saying that he just wanted to touch base with him on it.

A month later he was watching an informal game of basketball with Phil Sergeant while covering part of Dan's lunchtime gym supervision. When Dan came to relieve him he told them both about Dean's brush with the police. He said that in a recent telephone call Dean admitted that he had been a fool and got taken for a ride. He then stressed that Dean would not coach at St. David's until the mess was sorted out but added that despite this he was impressed by him.

Promoting Professional Development

Allan was very keen to promote professional development and spent time initiating projects, seeking staff input, acting on their suggestions, providing support, and giving encouragement. As principal he felt he had, "The ability to say let's try that" to the teachers. He elaborated on this theme when he noted:

> I guess I would see myself as an initiator. I drop ideas on to people and say that I'd like them to look at them or ask them what they think of these notions. I am a motivator when it comes to my profession.

He told me that in the previous year he had spoken to Louise Turner about developing students' art. He wanted the art to be framed and hung outside the library and asked her to work on a name for that area with the students. They came up with 'The Foyer Gallery' and Allan often stopped to admire the paintings on his travels. On one lunchtime patrol he mentioned that there would soon be more examples of student artwork on the walls and reflected on the importance of student artwork around the school. During the professional development day I chatted with Louise about the project and she said she was glad that Allan was so supportive.

At the first staff meeting of the year he informed everyone that at the first professional development day Mary and Judith would be leading sessions on cooperative learning and Ernie and Kate would follow that with an examination of computer applications. A week before it Judith came to give him some details about the workshop she was presenting. She described her methods and Allan approved, saying, "Good hands on stuff, great." Later in the conversation he showed his confidence in her ability by stating, "I'm not thinking about it at all, it's all in your capable hands!"

The forthcoming student teacher practicum was also regarded as a professional development initiative for the faculty and Allan told them so at the first staff meeting. During an early interview he noted that "the staff have to be more aware of their skills so that they can pass them on." Looking back on the term he considered the student teacher exercise to be one of the highlights.

He certainly thought that the school had benefitted and admitted:

> One of the reasons I asked the university to consider us was that the practicum would give us some status. St. David's would be recognized as a school that has competent teachers. The school could be part of the system to develop young teachers.

Promoting professional development also involved seeking staff input to aid his own decision making. It gave them a feeling of belonging and sometimes it enabled him to see a problem from a different angle. Allan called a department heads' meeting one day to discuss trimming their budgets. He told them that the main item "out of whack" was the textbooks, added that they could assist Bernie by making up the deficit from other parts of the budget or from the projected surplus, and asked for suggestions. Dan said that he was told the cost of the printers would be $2,600 not $4,000 as first thought and then mentioned that a broken television was covered by insurance so the English department did not need another. Julie Skinner did not feel that her budget could be pared and queried the photocopier expenditures. Allan answered that it was because they had just bought a huge consignment of paper. Richard suggested a ten percent levy on the spending of each department and Allan asked them if they could calculate whether that could be met. He added, "I'd like you to do it first, I just don't want to do this myself as we need to have some shared input."

Allan found out from one of the other Catholic principals that Caro College was operating a course in which students would come to schools and set up programmes for school libraries. He went to the library office, found Mary working, and asked her for her opinion. She said that she was pleased it was being brought to her attention but would like to examine the Macintosh library programme first. She added that what she really needed was someone to put all the book titles onto a computer disk.

Kate considered Allan to be "open to suggestions" and thought that was "what [made] it easier to work for him." She reminded me that at the staff meeting I attended before Remembrance Day they had asked him to run through the assembly routine with the students. Allan began to prepare for this assembly and told me that after a conversation with Alison he had

decided to combine it with a "pep rally" to pat a few students on the back. On October 25th Allan sent one of his "From the Principal's Desk" circulars to the staff about the activity assembly. In it he wrote,

> We will be having a 'practice assembly' on Monday in order to establish procedures for assemblies. We also need to review such items as earthquake procedures and fire drills. I want it to be a positive assembly, so teams will be introduced, and some extra-curricular activities will be highlighted. A display on the rowing machine might be a possibility.

The assembly took place on the last Monday in October and after the Remembrance Day Service in November both Chantal Duroc and Judith told Allan how well behaved the students were. It was also noted at the next staff meeting how smoothly the service went and how reverent the atmosphere was.

Allan's attitude at faculty meetings in general was to "moderate [them] without being dominant." He wanted a decision to be one where "we all own part of it because we've all discussed it, have agreed to it and have had a really good opportunity to voice opinions." An example of this occurred in the first meeting when changes to the bell schedule were discussed. Allan supported the first proposal as he argued that it would make life much easier for Sue, who kept the attendance records. However, a third proposal, a compromise between the first two was accepted. Allan told me later that he wished the first proposal had been accepted but then shrugged and said it was their decision.

On another occasion Allan was approached by Alison and Pete about safety conditions in the laboratories and the possibility of part-time teachers taking up the position of laboratory assistant to boost their salary. They stressed the safety aspects of the situation and he stated that if it involved safety he would certainly take it to the board and he was sure they would consider it. Allan told the board and the feeling was that they needed more information. So later on he brought it up in a department heads' meeting. They strongly agreed with his proposal that part-time teachers should be used as laboratory assistants and Julie said that the teacher should conduct the experiment while the assistant should supervise the written work. They did not, however, agree with the alternative suggestion aired that students should be used

in this role. Allan brought up the salary issue and reckoned that a substitute teacher's wage was not enough for this kind of work and that met with their approval. He finished by saying that in a nutshell they needed to have a laboratory aide. The last person I saw him speak to on this issue was George Grey, one of the Science teachers. He told him that he had talked to the department heads about laboratory assistants and was writing a report on it. George readily agreed with the idea and said that having two adults in a room was administratively easier.

Allan also tried to establish a positive climate by providing more direct support. This involved covering the financial costs of materials, field trips, and in-service courses. Dan spoke of getting support for equipment and noted, "He's pretty good that way." Phil mentioned to me that Allan, "liaises with the Parent Advisory Group and that gets us money when we are out." When it came to field trips Allan maintained that he was:

> Very keen to endorse and fund any good experience for the kids outside school. For example, Martha came in and gave me a date for the kids to go to the theatre in the afternoon. It may mean they miss a few classes. However I think that we, as a group, accept the sort of philosophy that kids should have good learning experiences outside the school.

Phil supported this as he mentioned, "I've never heard him say you can't do that unless I suggest taking a field trip bungi-jumping to teach pendulum motion; I think I might get a negative on that one!" When Beth came into Allan's office to request permission to take some students to an opera dress rehearsal Allan was very keen on the idea. He said that he was pleased that they were going to the Marriage of Figaro and all the costs would be taken care of.

This attitude extended to teachers wanting to go on professional development courses. Diane Pascal told him about the weekend course she was attending and he stated that he would get her some funds from the accounts to cover her expenses. Lucy Thompson asked permission to go on three courses. Allan agreed to the first two straightaway and told her to get the brochure for the third to assess how valuable it would be. When she asked who would pay he replied that the school would since there was money for this kind of thing.

As with the students Allan was ready to be positive and pat teachers on the back. He might do this formally with an announcement at a staff meeting, with a note on their file or in their mail slot, or informally by thanking them personally for something. Lucy had requested some time to talk to the staff about the learning assistance programme that she ran. When she had finished and fielded some questions Allan told her, "It's neat that you remind us about what you do." Kate came to show Allan a note of thanks she had received from one of her students and Allan looked at it and remarked, "Isn't that good." He went on to say that he was putting something on her file about her contribution at the professional development day and that she could use it on her resume. Allan enlarged on this process during one interview:

> I'll write a synopsis on the reactions of the staff. I want to compliment her and put that on her file so that it helps her if she ever looks for another job. It's just saying that I appreciate what she has done and she should be complimented for it. People should know what her capabilities are.

He also told me that with regard to teachers he wanted to be as positive as he could be and one option was to use a special card to write them a note of thanks. He gave the example that:

> Mary does a great job as a teacher and as a librarian she organizes a lot of things. It's just marvellous. Shortly after I arrived, maybe October, I decided that this was great so I just pulled out a card and just whipped it off. I wrote, "Mary, I just want to compliment you on your work, it is really neat, and I've really enjoyed observing you." I signed it and put it in her box.

Allan told the staff at the beginning of term that one of his objectives was to visit more classrooms so if they had something special planned they should let him know. More often, though, his visits were unplanned and occurred because he wanted to talk to the teacher in question or because he saw something exciting going on. Passing the gym once he saw students being put through an exercise drill, which involved them using various pieces of apparatus in sequence. We stood and watched as Deb spurred some students on, congratulated others, and blew her whistle when she wanted them to change stations. When the students were sent to the changing rooms Deb came to talk to us and Allan told her he found the lesson really interesting to watch. Deb looked pleased

and said that she did a spot check at one of the stations to make sure that the effort level did not drop. Allan thanked her and continued on his tour of the corridors.

Nicky came into the office and told him that the bear box that she required students to put money into if they were late to her class fed three people at the Loaves and Fishes Food Bank. He said that it was a terrific idea and should stop those trips to the lockers and she confirmed that it had, as a nickel was paid for the first offence and a quarter was paid out after that. Allan then mentioned that it was the kind of thing he wanted to share with other staff members.

Together with these longer exchanges came the quick comments, gestures, or actions which had the same effect. Allan might compliment Alec Stewart on his drama group as he walked with him along the corridor. He might smile and comment about delicious French cuisine as he surveyed the meal that Chantal and her students had prepared. He might also give Julie a 'thumbs up' sign as he passed by her classroom, or pat Dan on the back.

Allan enjoyed going to the informal and voluntary 8.15 meetings in the faculty room. He regarded them as important to staff collegiality and indeed the minutes of one staff meeting stated that the "general feeling of togetherness" gained from these sessions was necessary. As he said:

> We encourage people to be there, if they can be. Generally people will make most, though, not all of them. I can't make all of them myself. I might get stuck in here with something and I just can't go. It is a sort of tradition that we have and it is a good one. People do appreciate it and some are there nearly all the time . . . so it is part of the nature of the school.

In this setting Allan was quietly able to develop and reinforce his own view of professionalism. On one occasion he made himself a cup of coffee and took it to the staffroom. There he sat down beside Chantal and found out that her children had enjoyed the play they watched. He then turned to Dan and inquired after his cold and was informed that it was on the wane. The conversation around them turned to sport and Phil told Allan that Ian Curry had been to the school match last night. Ian gave him the details and Allan asked if the team would make the playoffs. At this both Ian and Phil said all the teams would and Allan

commented that it was as bad as the N.H.L.

Allan then mentioned the complaint that he had from the police about firecracker throwing and the general agreement of the group was that they would have to be more vigilant. There was a lull in the conversation and Allan asked Bruce to provide his thought for the day. Bruce said a quick prayer about patience and when they had finished Allan said that it was short but to the point.

Next Allan talked about the concern over student conduct in assemblies raised at the last staff meeting. He said he wanted to have a practice assembly as they had suggested but wanted the procedures for fire and earthquake drills to be explained and various sports teams to be introduced at the same time. He wished to have a "pep rally" type atmosphere and thought it might even be possible to have a rowing machine competition but he would have to see Deb. Again there was general agreement about his plan and then Dan turned the conversation to the school dance. He asked about the dress for it as he had heard that Billy Simms would be coming as a member of the Ku Klux Klan. Allan replied that he had already told him that he would consider it inappropriate and so would many of the students. Just after this the bell went and the teachers began to drift away from the faculty room.

Understanding Other Groups

Just as Kate Ingram emphasized to me that Allan "would go into bat for anyone of the staff," I saw him trying to get them to understand where the other groups were coming from. As usual he went about this task of promoting a professional attitude towards others slowly, carefully, and quietly. He explained to me:

> One thing we have to do is to respect students. Some teachers feel that they're on a different plane; they're God. It's almost like they don't respect students' judgment, their feelings and so on. We have to respect them, not to the degree where they take over, but there has to be that respect there for kids. If we don't do that they'll be the first to pick it up . . . I think we're co-learners.

Often he just reinforced what teachers were already doing. So when Father Pat talked about his group and said, "I just love

them and I'm enjoying the work," Allan replied, "tremendous," smiled and gave him the 'thumbs up' sign. He might also bind staff and students closer together by getting them to work with each other on some project. A day after a grade nine student, Jody Carr, approached Allan to ask if she could produce a video of the school he went to see Louise. He asked Louise to take her under her wing for as he said, "She's a bright kid who's on a scholarship" and, "I hate to put a kid like that off." Louise replied, "I'm looking forward to having her in my art class," and Allan added, "I said to her to get a script together then to see you." Louise then added, "I'd be happy to do it." Later on that day Allan was in the hallway watching the main entrance being decorated with Christmas scenes when Jody came up to him and declared that she had a rough plan drawn up. He directed her to Louise and said that she would help her.

Sometimes relationships between staff and students became strained and Allan tried to mend the fences. Kate sent a student, Tanya Gordon, to his office for being late and badly behaved. Allan told her that Mrs. Ingram was not the sort of teacher who whistled students down to the office for anything and she remarked that she was not in the best of moods that day. He then suggested that her teacher might not have been either, explained the school's concern for punctuality after break, and recommended that she should apologise sincerely. He caught up with Kate by the photocopier and said that she might be getting a visit from Tanya. He explained that Tanya was not in a good mood and that she did have a late slip but had not had the time to produce it. Kate still felt that her attitude was surly but said that she would wait for the apology.

In keeping with Allan's own feeling that parents should be recognised for their importance in the St. David's organization he emphasized the significance of their role to the teachers. He also urged them to be professional in their contact with the parental body. These two points were made in the teacher handbook:

> Parents play an integral part in the education of their children. Parents should be contacted at the first sign of academic problems regarding their child. The administration will assist the teachers with parent contacts. Parents will have the opportunity to attend parent-teacher interviews to discuss their children's progress with both house and subject teachers in November and January.

Lucy came to Allan's office shortly after the first parent-teacher interviews to talk to him about a letter she had written as a result of one meeting. Allan recommended caution as they both regarded this as a tricky family situation and suggested that Lucy should telephone to arrange the follow-up meeting. He said that the next interview should be conducted fairly soon and it should lead to a discussion with all parties. At another short conference Allan and Julie discussed students in danger of failing courses. They agreed that a formal notice to parents to the effect that their child was in danger of failing would be professional. Julie added, "It looks more professional, I agree."

Before relations between the board and teachers became polarized and negated much of Allan's effort he used certain strategies to help staff perceptions of board members. He passed on information and suggestions from board members to the faculty. So, in response to Father Leyton's query about evening classes at St. David's, Allan floated his suggestion at the next staff meeting. He told them he thought the reasoning behind Father Leyton's idea was to let the community know that they were open to sharing. Discussion centred around the experiences at other schools, the fact that an evening E.S.L. class at St. David's had worked in the past, and the fees to be charged. In the end the staff passed a motion that, "We are in favour of the board investigating the possibility of adult education in September."

He also welcomed board members when they came to school functions. So when Maggie attended the professional development day Allan told the assembled staff that he was glad that an invitation was sent to the board and that Maggie could come. He then stated that he hoped parents would attend future sessions, especially those on curriculum developments.

He endeavoured to smooth over staff worries about board actions. Mary, for instance was concerned at one point because one board member had criticised the number of books in the library. Allan spoke to her in her office and said that he felt the selection of books showed a plan and even though the number of books was comparatively small the quality was there. He also told her not to worry as the criticism was not a dig at her. On another occasion Allan was having a quiet discussion with Kate about the state of the negotiations between the board and the teachers. During the

conversation Kate mentioned how sorry she and others were that Bernie was critical of Allan's handling of the budget at the recent board meeting. Allan responded that although he was gratified by staff support he did not want a board and staff split over this. Kate agreed and they put it down to a lack of communication. Later in the conversation Kate said that she herself felt that the board talked about putting the staff first but she had yet to see it in these negotiations to which Allan replied that the board did value what the staff was doing.

The Contradictions in Healing

When the teachers started to work to the letter of their contract Allan felt frustrated. He said that the relationship between the board and the teachers:

> Became adversarial when it was not necessary . . . It doesn't have to be because the people I am working with are not adversarial. They are on our side. We are working together for the benefit of a bunch of kids here. This is hopefully the whole purpose.

He remarked to me that he was worried that a sense of sharing between the staff and the board had been replaced by stereotyping along employee/employer lines. He also feared that the teachers' professional image was suffering and told me after the end of term, "What I perceived could happen was that the whole damn thing could just fall apart." Nevertheless Allan tried hard during this time to pour oil on troubled waters and Alison, one of the leading figures in the teachers' group, was impressed. She said to me, "I mean he was a bit annoyed with me but he didn't blow up and I could give him a hug and say Allan this is difficult for everybody and I'm just glad I can come to you." Yet Allan was concerned about his own relationship with the staff in that he told me:

> They keep telling me it's between them and the board. I don't want to talk about the teachers and the board. What I want to talk about is me and my relationship with them. Right now it's not very good and I think they have to know that. I've told Pete how I feel about what they're doing.

Summary

Before Christmas Allan was concerned about his bond with the teachers. That did not mean he set aside what he had been doing all term though. He was still prepared to chat with them, hear what they had to say, and encourage them to be professionals. He still wanted to initiate and continue projects, seek staff input and recommendations, and was content to support staff requests to go to conferences. As before he provided positive support for individuals when they needed it. The teachers appreciated that and it showed that his relationship with them remained strong despite his worries and their troubles with the board.

GIVE US A CHANCE TO DO IT

According to Allan the board's role was to decide on the policies that the administration would put into practice. As he bluntly put it to me, "They've got someone running the school for them and if they think we're not doing a good job they should come and tell us about it. They should give us a chance to do it and not be a nuisance." He said that he made this clear at the first board meeting to establish the proper lines of communication and avoid the situation that had existed where board members "were actually coming in and making demands." To Dan Fisher, one of the teachers I interviewed, this was important:

> Now I have to say that one of the strengths Allan has . . . is that he understands the roles of the administration and the board and that they should be separate. would say that if Allan has done us one big service it is really to say, look the administration runs day to day happenings and the board does policy . . . He just said, "I have to say it: your role is this."

Even though it was Allan's second year at St. David's and there was a new board chairperson this recent history was still very much alive for him. As he told them what was going on, defended his actions, and tried to build bridges between them and the other constituencies, this context remained like a dark and forbidding cloud.

Passing on Information

Item five on the agenda of the September board meeting was the principal's report. From the minutes and my own field notes the first piece of information that Allan passed on was about the Educational Planning Team that he was organizing. He told them about its composition, his goals for it, and the role that he hoped the parental members would take. Two members of the board, Pierre Dumont and Brian Templeton, who were also parents, were seconded onto this team. Allan then told them that the internal workshop to be given by two teachers, Judith Edwards and Mary Lee, was about cooperative learning, one of the strands of this curriculum initiative.

He went on to say that he had asked the teachers to submit lists of items that would enhance their programmes and those wish lists would be presented to the next meeting of the Parents' Auxiliary Group for their consideration. Bernie Montgomery noted that board approval was needed for all expenditures and Allan told them that he would bring the list to the next board meeting for their perusal.

Next in his report came information about changes to the textbook grant system. He advised them that prescribed texts were provided to the school by the Education Ministry's Publication Services Branch on a per capita dollar basis. Supplementary books, however, were not now being provided by this allocation method and so seven thousand dollars had been budgeted to cover this additional cost. His last points were that a newsletter had already been sent out to parents and that Bruce was preparing a Parish Report for distribution to all supporting parishes. This would be done three or four times a year and the message, as he told me later, was that it was crucial to send worthwhile information out to the wider community.

Board members did visit the school for committee meetings, to attend significant religious services, to watch school choral productions, and on a more casual basis to chat to Allan. At these times Allan was able to provide information to them in a less formal and yet still significant way. Allan was on the Bursary Committee with Marian Coates, the school accountant, and David Lambeth, from the board. Their first meeting of the term was held

in an unused classroom. He started by telling David about the diocesan survey to find out why more Catholic children were not attending Catholic schools when there were flourishing youth groups in the area. He then mentioned that this had been discussed at a meeting of all the local Catholic school administrators and gave him a summary of what was said. At another session they were discussing the question of how much students from poor families could be financially supported and he passed on Bruce's message that if the school helped needy students they could apply for a government grant.

During the first part of the term Maggie Kenning, one of the board members, dropped into the office on a regular basis. Although Allan was ambivalent about this and said to me, "She wants to do a good job and she will, but I think she's carrying it a little too far," much information passed between them. At their first meeting Allan referred to an incident over the holidays which caused a significant decline in enrolment at one of the feeder schools and stressed the need for good communication between parishes and schools. Maggie said that she had heard about it and they went on to analyze the incident in terms of actions, reactions, and consequences. At another meeting Allan told her about the part time coach, Dean Griffiths, who had been arrested after his early morning coaching session. Because of this he had decided that there should not be any contact between him and the students until he was cleared of any suspicion, but he stressed to her that he was "a good guy." Maggie commiserated with him and agreed with his decision.

According to Allan he told the board early on that he considered their role to be a supportive one. As he put it, "You are helping to organize mostly the financial structure and I would appreciate it if any concerns about the school could be brought directly to me." While Allan wanted the board to assist with the school's accounts he maintained that it was vital that he knew about the school's financial situation and understood what was happening. He mentioned this in one interview:

> I want to get a handle on the budget and how it works because I have to. Because I'm the central person in the school it doesn't mean that I let someone else get on with the budget and don't understand what's going on. The budget dictates our philosophy; where we put extra money this year and not next year. I guess

it makes people more accountable.

Defending His Actions

Both Maggie and Bernie brought their financial concerns to him and Allan understood their actions. Maggie, he said was "concerned that all the 't's are crossed and so on," and Bernie needed " to know in some detail what all these budgets mean so that he can approve departmental spending." However Allan often became defensive as he tried to defend his actions and arguments.

Maggie, for instance, came into his office after the first board meeting and voiced her worry about the budget overruns for textbooks in general and bibles in particular. Allan explained that he had been looking for other ways to get the shipment of bibles paid for as well as putting it under other account headings. However in the face of her criticism he added, "I felt they were needed and so did Paul" and pointed out that Paul brought the request to him in late August. Maggie's response before the conversation moved to another topic was that she thought the issue was presented as a fait accompli.

At first Allan was happy to comply with Bernie's wishes for a detailed breakdown of various accounts. However, he began to feel that Bernie's demands were becoming greater and he did not have a clear indication of what Bernie actually wanted. Allan was upset when a motion was passed at the October board meeting which implied that he had not given Bernie the details the latter had asked for. He talked to Bruce about the meeting and declared, "where's the board in this? Where's Maggie? What it says to me is they can't trust us or the staff." He argued that this move to break down the budget was a precedent and as a matter of policy it should have been brought to the board for discussion before anything else happened.

Some days after the motion was passed Maggie tried to smooth things over by saying that it was not the board's intention to cause friction or to roast him in public. Allan complained that he was hurt by the motion and informed her that some staff members had expressed their support, to which Maggie replied that she would come round on Monday to make sure that everything was sorted with no ill-feeling. Allan finished by saying that he needed

to telephone Bernie to find out what was going on. Later he told me that he felt sure that the issue could soon be resolved without too much trouble. After a few days he telephoned Bernie, fixed a date when they could get together with Marian about budget matters, and informed him that he had some more figures for him and would send the material by courier. He also began to see things in perspective and recover his sense of humour. While he was talking with the department heads about how they were assisting Bernie by trimming their budgets he grinned and remarked that he felt that he had to salute Bernie all the time.

The issue of Father Pat's fees also came up in discussions about the budget. Maggie, who was on the board's personnel committee, told Allan at an early meeting that bringing in an outside clergyman to teach was a dangerous precedent and she thought that the board, especially Bernie, might challenge the fees to be paid to him. In a later altercation about it he asserted, "I made a judgment and you disagree with it," to which she retorted, "It wasn't just me." He then fired back, "I hope my judgment is seen as okay!" and when she left saying that she would have to consult the teacher representative, he shook his head and said, "God!" In an interview later that day Allan was more circumspect about it and commented:

> She's right as it should have been done with her, but when Pat sat here talking about expanding the programme and the suggestion was that he could take a grade eight class, things just went from there. She's thinking it is a bigger problem than it is. I don't see it as a major problem. I think most of the board are happy enough but with the way she brought it up it became a problem. That's how I viewed it and I was getting a little annoyed this morning. We made a judgment and we feel we've made a good one. She's a hundred percent behind Father Pat but what she's upset with is the process. I didn't include her in the decision. Well I did and I didn't, I told her shortly thereafter.

Their disagreement subsided just before the second board meeting. She said that they should bury the hatchet and present a united front about Father Pat's fees. He, in turn, apologised for the process involved in giving the grade eight class to Father Pat and the budgetary implications of his actions. Reflecting back on this incident and the problem over the budget breakdown after the term was over Allan commented:

> I've had a bit of a problem with some people on the board and I guess a lot of times it's a lack of understanding. In some ways there is lack of communication from me, but I'm working with a bunch of volunteers who have little experience and their responses sometimes are completely unfounded and I might react in the wrong way you know. I've done that on a few occasions so I think a lot of it has to do with communication.

Building Bridges

Despite some misunderstandings with certain members of the board Allan certainly tried to build bridges between them and other groups, particularly the teachers. He told me that the relationship between the teachers and the board and had gone through a bad patch before he became principal and he had been trying to improve the situation. When he had the opportunity he spoke positively about the efforts of other groups. At one meeting Father Leyton asked the other board members to consider holding certain adult education classes for parents and parishioners at St. David's. Allan supported his proposal and said that the idea had also been brought forward by the teachers and that he would study the matter with Bruce and report back to them at the next meeting.

New teachers and student teachers were given positive reports by Allan when at board meetings or talking to individual board members. This gave them a certain formal standing in the school community. Maggie announced to the board at the same meeting that a replacement for Harry James, the music teacher, had been found and told them something of her experience. Allan added that he thought that she would be fine. Towards the end of term Maggie telephoned Allan to find out about the progress of the student teachers. Allan was complimentary about Dave Vasseur, the student teacher he took over responsibility for, and finished by saying, "What we have here is a lad with a master's degree in Chemistry who's very self-confident."

When talking to Maggie, Bernie, and other board members about accounting methods and budgeting systems Allan did emphasize that the staff were supportive of these changes. As he answered board questions about the operation of the new purchase order system he made the comment that the staff were getting used to this innovation. To Maggie he pointed out that the teachers were happy with these new procedures and were learning the ropes.

He repeated this message to Bernie in a telephone conversation when he stated that this was the first time the staff had been asked to do this and they were getting good practice.

Both Allan and Maggie agreed that it was necessary for parents to become more involved in school life. In keeping with this Allan stated at the first board meeting that parental inclusion on the Educational Planning Team was was not intended to be a token gesture. He reiterated this in November to the board members, teachers, and parents, assembled together for the first Educational Planning Team session. He told them that it was right for parents to have a greater voice in the operation of schools and when he gave them their homework at the end of the evening he said that his objective was that they should send a response to the Ministry of Education about the proposed curriculum changes.

The two board members at this meeting also heard Allan pay compliments to his teaching staff. He remarked that, "We as a staff are looking at different teaching styles." After a video on the proposed educational changes and the need to respect the learner Allan related the story of Ian Curry sharing information on bioethics with Father Pat. Two weeks later before the board meeting Brian Templeton had a brief but positive review with Allan about the work of the Educational Planning Team. My feeling was that teachers, board members, and parents working together on this project was a good sign and gave Allan the opportunity to tighten the web.

All Fall Down

However, this quiet bridge building fell apart when the relationship between the staff and the board really deteriorated towards the end of term. Allan expressed his own immense frustration over the telephone to one board member he knew well, Catherine Delaney. He exclaimed bitterly, "We've been working our tails off for the past year and a half to promote a positive image; half a day and look what's happened." He told me later that he could not get involved in these negotiations but he hoped the affair would soon blow over so that relations could be restored.

Summary

Allan recognized the importance of the board's role at St. David's and met with them frequently on formal and informal occasions. However he wanted to keep them at arm's length for he was worried that they would interfere too much in the running of the school. When he felt that his independence of action was being threatened he could become quite defensive. He also knew that the relationship between the teachers and the board had been strained and he made an effort to bring the two sides closer together. However, the wound opened and Allan felt disillusioned because the two threads would have to be tied up again and that meant much effort for little tangible reward.

NOT JUST SELLING HOT DOGS AND STUFF

It was Allan's feeling that the bonding between the more fragmented parent body and the other constituent groups needed to be strengthened. Traditionally their role had been very much in the background and his hope was that they should become much more involved in the life of the community. In his words:

> I guess what I'd like to do is to get the parents to begin thinking about a new role that they might see themselves in, not just selling hot dogs and stuff, not that that isn't important . . . I just think it makes for a heck of a lot stronger union.

Calling for greater parental involvement, he knew, came up against the societal problem that "most of them have jobs." His answer was to try to preserve and strengthen established links and this took four forms. Firstly, the traditional flow of information was maintained. Secondly, verbal and written reassurances of their importance to the community were given. Thirdly, parental involvement in committees was increased and lastly, contributions that other groups made to school culture were emphasized to them.

The Need for Information

The message "St. David's recognizes that all members of our school community are in need of information which affects them" was stated in the Student-Parent Handbook. The means of communication for parents were then listed. They included: regular newsletters, report cards, parent-teacher interviews, the Parent Auxiliary Group, open School Board meetings, and monthly liturgies.

The first newsletter of the academic year certainly provided readers with a range of information pertinent to life at the school. Allan started it off with words of welcome, particularly for new parents and students, and proceeded to lay out the meetings and groups that parents were free to attend or join. Examples of this were:

> School Board Meetings are monthly and are open to all. This year the School Board will meet at 8.00pm. on the third Wednesday of each month.
>
> The Parent Auxiliary Group continues to support the school in so many important ways. Their financial contributions are extensive and include additions to all departments. It is new and growing and welcomes ideas and help from all parents. Whether you are a long time St. David's parent or a brand new member of the school we look forward to meeting you on September 20, at 7.30pm. in the school library.

In the same issue Allan passed on to parents departmental requests for materials and pleas for financial aid. So, by providing concrete support the parents could feel that they were doing something of value for the school. They were asked to clean out kitchen cupboards and donate all old champagne corks and garlic presses to the art department and were invited to sponsor pages of the forthcoming yearbook. Also information about professional development and the "Music and Musicians' calendar" was supplied and on the last page was the school calendar for the first term.

During meetings with parents information and expectations were often passed backwards and forwards. One afternoon Allan met with some parents to discuss certain procedural concerns that they had. Gerry Stirling had placed their son in detention which meant that he could not play a volleyball match. The problem

arose when his mother arrived after the match to collect him only to find that he was not there. She was informed about his detention but when she went to school she found that he was not there either. It was now dark and she returned home very worried to find that he had come back by bus. They told Allan that they wanted this type of situation to be addressed so that anxious times like these could be avoided.

Allan listened without comment and when they had finished told them that in this case the school policy was that the student should miss the match. He added that he would talk to Gerry and make sure that the situation which developed would not happen again. Both parents emphasized that the detention given to their son was not an issue and thanked Allan for letting them express their concern. Allan, in turn, said that he was glad they came to see him about it and he would chat to their son about the matter.

Reassurance of Their Value

The second method Allan used to tie parents to the school web was to make them feel that they were a valuable part of the community. At one meeting of the Parent Auxiliary Group he stressed that, "What this group does is very much appreciated. The equipment you have worked to buy us is a real asset for the school and we can't thank you enough." For those parents who did not know, he then summarized what the money was earmarked for. On mentioning "newsletter mailing" he remarked on the necessity of having good communication and added drily that he had received a number of positive comments about the newsletters arriving in one piece! With the Christmas newsletter Allan repeated his thanks to the Parent Auxiliary Group and wrote that the money they provided allowed items like gymnastic equipment, bibles, and a kiln to be purchased for students.

In a more indirect way Allan told parents that they belonged to the school community by trying to ease their fears when the dispute between the board and the teachers surfaced. Naturally enough the Parent Auxiliary Group meeting following this event was very well attended. Allan gave them a detailed account of what was going on and assured them that disruption was minimal, that his role was of necessity neutral, and that he wanted to stop

any rumours spreading. As he said to me later:

> That was really the message, I guess, to allay any fears. I guess that was the main reason. In a sense all I wanted to do was talk about it very briefly because they wanted to know what was going on. I really wanted to say to them, "it's not that big a deal." I also wished to tell them that it was important that they knew how I felt. They're a representative group and are entitled to that.

This reassurance also took the form of financial guarantees for prospective parents who were in tune with the school culture. A soft-spoken Central American parent came to talk to Allan in Mid September. His family had been receiving financial assistance at the feeder school, St. Michael's, but he was concerned that the fees at St. David's were higher. Allan listened and then told him not to worry as it was not a school board policy to refuse education to needy families. He continued to say that the family should only take care of what they could afford. Later, Allan said to Marian and Bruce that he had asked him to pay something as he felt that people want to feel that they are contributing something. The parent was relieved for he clasped Allan's hand and said "Thank you sir!" twice. After the meeting Allan remarked that this was a classic case for the available bursary money and noted with a smile that this problem was an easy one to solve.

Alison Peters, one of the faculty members whom I interviewed, noted that this was a part of Allan's educational philosophy:

> I think Allan has really attempted to move the school's original philosophy forward in the number of bursaries provided. He often says there will not be Catholic children not going to this school and if they want to come the school will allow them in. He's made that become a reality and I think that is a global vision.

Greater Involvement

The provincial educational changes provided the catalyst for Allan to increase parent representation on committees, his third strategy to bring them into the fold. He wrote in the local newspaper article:

> We must not forget those who will be there to support us throughout these

> dramatic changes . . . the parents. Parents should be included now as we begin our study of these guidelines. Let's enable them first.

More active parent participation was something he believed in for he said to me, "They've been involved in fund raising, they've come to parent nights but I want them to get involved in the operation of the curriculum because I think they should." Furthermore he spoke about the impact of this new role:

> I really do feel that they have to be told, by doing something for them and with them, that they are a very significant part of this community. This may only mean that they are more supportive of what we are doing and are trying to help their children at home.

Allan announced in the first newsletter that an Educational Planning Team would be formed to evaluate the provincial educational changes and wrote that it would be composed of parents, staff, and board members. It was also discussed at the second school board meeting. Here he expressed his wish that parents from this committee should eventually explain the changes to the other parents. With a question about how parents were being chosen he stated that he was approaching people whom he knew were interested in the subject and had a background that would be helpful.

During the course of the term he narrowed the list of parents to eight and sent out letters of invitation to join the Educational Planning Team. He told me that:

> This says to parents that we respect them and their judgment about these changes and how they will affect their kids. We also want them to help us to examine things.

The first meeting got underway in November. Allan asked everybody to introduce themselves and then provided some background details about the changes. He underlined the role that parents would play at St. David's by saying, "When we change, parents should be on the ground floor with us." Next he mentioned his goal of having a parent, not the principal or a teacher, explain the changes to the rest of the parents. He also supplied examples of the ministerial recommendations. The meeting concluded with

Allan setting them some homework which would eventually result in the group sending a response to the Ministry of Education.

The day after this meeting Allan observed that the parents were intrigued that they were to be involved in this process. He added that in future he hoped that the two staff members present would assume more of a moderator's role. This would allow the parents to take more of the lead and he said that he would speak to Dan about it. At the next staff meeting he informed them that a memo would be coming out giving particulars of the Educational Planning Team. He then told them about the first meeting and again focussed on the new role in it for St. David's parents.

Improving Awareness of Other Contributions

Allan's last tactic to bind the more fragmented parental body tighter to the school purpose was to make individuals and groups more aware of the contribution that others were making. On one such occasion a father expressed concern about his daughter, Suzie's, progress in Mathematics. She had asked for and received extra help and he wanted to know if there was anything more that could be done. Allan emphasized right away that the teacher concerned was very competent and provided extra lessons for the slower learners. He said that he would speak to the teacher and was confident that she would monitor the situation. He also noted that Suzie's own action to seek extra help was a very positive step and finished by saying that she was a good person.

In the last days of the term Allan received a letter from a parent complaining about one teacher's unprofessional conduct. With the deteriorating relationship between the teachers and the board, the teachers were reluctant to provide services like extra tutoring after school hours. As a result Ernie Reid's extra coaching sessions stopped. This upset one of the pupils concerned and led to the parental letter of complaint. Allan talked to Ernie about the letter and the background to the charge. He calmed Ernie's fear that the incident would go on his teaching record and said that he would telephone Geraldine's father.

Part of the complaint dealt with the reasons that Ernie had given for ending these extra sessions. Geraldine's version of what had been said differed from the information given to Allan by Ernie.

During the telephone call Geraldine's father repeated her story and Allan, in reply, asserted, "I don't feel it would be stated like that and nor does Mr. Stokes." Allan went on to tell him that even though the extra coaching arrangement had been fairly informal Ernie had been disappointed that Geraldine had only appeared once. However, he told her father that he would talk to the head of department and arrange a peer tutor for Geraldine. He ended the conversation by saying that he just wanted to touch base with him about it.

The newsletter was another way of explaining the reasons for certain cultural activities and of showing what other groups were doing. For example care was taken in it to explain the purpose of professional days. Allan wrote:

> On these days classes are not in session. This allows the staff to attend workshops and conferences on matters affecting their subject areas. The few days we take are necessary for us to keep up with the latest developments in education. The teaching and learning process is constantly changing, and we must be prepared to examine and evaluate these changes as they affect our students.

The Christmas newsletter featured a number of informative titbits that demonstrated what certain students had achieved or attended with their teachers. Examples included:

> United Nations Association Essay Competition - Grade 12 student Lydia Yarachenko placed second in the senior division of the regional United Nations Association essay Competition. This year's topic was illiteracy. All grade 12 students are required to enter at least one essay competition in order to fulfil their English 12 requirements.
>
> Author breakfast - Mrs. Peters and four students, Michael Lawrence, Gavin Sillitoe, Jane Pasternak, and Jesse Hines, attended an Author Breakfast with Robert Bateman on October 28 at Sandringham House.
>
> UNICEF Display - Three students, Dennis Lemieux, Dean Corson, and Nigel Smith, supported by Mrs. Parks and Mrs. Alexander, assisted with the UNICEF Display at Regency Mall on October 30.

Summary

Allan realized the educational importance of having a parent group tightly woven into the culture of the school. He knew that the spinning process needed constant attention and that gains made were measured in inches. He knew also that mistakes could undo the painstaking work of months in a matter of days. Therefore the steady stream of information from the administration to the parents continued and people on school committees met, talked, planned, and acted. In all this communication the messages for parents were firstly that they were a vital strand of the school culture. Secondly, they were encouraged to continue to be actively engaged in the life of the school. Finally, they were told that other groups were also doing their best to ensure that St. David's flourished.

MY GOD WHERE DO THEY GET THESE THINGS FROM

The community at large was more like the air that surrounded the school's cultural web than a direct strand of it. Nevertheless, Allan thought that members of the community who had direct and indirect links with St. David's played a critical role in the vitality of the school. As such he hoped that they gained an accurate picture of what was happening at St. David's so that they could make informed comments and reasonable judgments. He said to me that, "The idea is that I don't want anyone out there misinterpreting or hearing some crazy rumour . . . we've already had one this year and it could have been an absolute disaster but it was completely squashed."

Maintaining a Good Public Image

To maintain a good public image and to balance any negative publicity he saw that there was a need to communicate especially with those connected to the school. As he declared one afternoon to me,

> You should hear some of the rumours I get. I think, my God where do they get these things? It is just unreal! So you go out with the idea of informing the

public, the Catholic public.

As St. David's was the only high school in the area he felt that they had a responsibility to keep parishioners up to date with what was going on as they were supporting the school. He did this by speaking at church services, sending out parish reports, and using the local newspaper. During one interview he told me that between them Bruce and he would cover all the parishes in the diocese and give a simple message during the mass. Another time he was more explicit and mentioned that when he was at St. Lawrence's in Warkworth the priest cancelled the sermon so that he could speak about Catholic schools and Catholic education. He informed them that he was the principal of St. David's and to help them understand what a Catholic school was he would share some of the things he saw with them. He used the story of one girl's reaction to another student's death to explain the Catholicity that they were trying to instil and recounted it for me:

> Everyone went to the funeral. A few days later I told the kids, especially his close friends who were having difficulty, to let the teachers know and they could leave class. I met a small group of grade twelve students on the front porch and I sat down and asked them how things were going. They said that it was getting better but it was still hard. I said to them that it was important to talk so that they got things out rather than kept them inside. One girl remarked that this was tough enough but asked us to imagine what things would be like if we did not have any faith at all and could not say prayers. You could not pray to someone to help you get through it. I said that she was right and I felt the same way. I added that my faith told me that Richard was probably in a better place . . . I shared this story with the congregation as I said that this is what Christian teaching is all about. If someone young can feel that way then we've accomplished something.

As he explained to the school board one of his goals for the year was to mail out letters to the local parishes. He reiterated this to the staff when he told them that accountability to the parishes was important and so he would be sending out a report to each parish giving them details of what was going on at St. David's. One afternoon towards the end of term I was observing him preparing this report. He said to me, "This makes people aware of what is happening in the school and is useful information for them." In a more formal conversation he maintained:

That's a very integral part, I feel, of what I am trying to do...What I am saying to the parish priests, and I say it in a letter to them, is,this is your high school whether you like it or not . . . I think sending out these forms of communication to the parishioners is working. Like in our parish the priest photocopied them all off and there was one with each church bulletin last Sunday.

The newspaper article he submitted was about the advantages of the proposed provincial education reforms but he told me he hoped that the school would gain a higher profile from it. At the end of the article he provided a brief autobiographical sketch and included was his present position of principal at St. David's. In it he was full of praise for teachers as he wrote, "I see now what I saw in the past; well-educated, professional, and dedicated teachers who have the talent and will to make it work." He also pointed out the potential benefits of this reform in the passage, "Society's reward will be creative, decision-making students who are prepared for a world which demands they accept the consequences of their decisions." This was not the end of his dealings with the newspapers for after Christmas I saw a note of congratulations from the school for one St. David's student who had just won a prestigious award.

The R.C.M.P. liaison officer, health nurse, student teachers, and their supervisors all had a direct link to the school. Allan was courteous, helpful, and keen to leave them with a good impression. On the second day of term the R.C.M.P. liaison officer arrived for a meeting. Allan introduced me, then shut the door and they proceeded to swap stories of car accidents that they had been involved in or had seen. The officer said that he would use the pictures taken of his car after it was hit by a drunk driver to reinforce his school talks about driver safety. They continued to talk for a while and it seemed to me that they were renewing what was an easy acquaintanceship.

The health nurse visited the school on a more regular basis and after our introduction she asked Allan if she could use another office as the gym office was too noisy. He said that he might be able to put her in Marian's office if their schedules did not clash and when he found that there was no overlap the problem was solved. As she rose to leave he mentioned that it was nice to see familiar faces and that he valued the continuity. When she had to

immunize grade nine students later in the term he ferried one group to her and stayed to ensure that they were quiet. With a few students to go he left, saying to me that he thought everything was alright. She came to his office on the way out and he asked her how it went. She replied, "Well, thanks a lot, it went very smoothly."

At a November staff meeting Allan got the sponsor teachers to introduce their student teachers and then welcomed them with the promise that "we're all here to help you." He remarked later to me that while they were there "they should be involved in the whole nature of the school" as they had "to realize that they [were] part of an entire community and it [was] important for them to see how it [worked]." I spoke to one student teacher, Ed Green, and he told me that he was impressed by the school and that the teacher's 'work to rule' did not affect his practicum adversely.

When Diane Pascal had to take a sudden leave of absence Allan took over as sponsor teacher for Dave Vasseur. He informed Dave just after it happened that Diane had to take this leave of absence and would probably be gone for the term. He added that he would see his supervisor and take her place as he did not want his practicum to suffer. We talked about it and he said:

> I've actually taken over Diane's supervision primarily so that Dave's practicum will not be jeopardized and he won't have to go to another school...I feel that it is essential that it is maintained. Also because it's our first year having student teachers in the building we should do as thorough and professional a job as we can for them.

As Dave's sponsor teacher Allan sat at the back of some of his classes. During the lessons I watched as well he gave him the 'thumbs up' sign and remarked on his confidence and good teaching techniques. At the end of term I observed Allan as he wrote cards to each student. He commented that he thought Dave had potential, was self-confident, learned quickly, and tried new things.

Strengthening Links With School Groups

To those university officials and advisers Allan was keen to put their minds at rest. He received a telephone call early in the year about Phil's status as a sponsor teacher. Allan used words

like "excellent" and "outstanding" to describe Phil's teaching and added, "He's probably one of the most popular teachers with the kids." He asserted later in the conversation, "What I've given you is very, very good teachers," and explained that he had given a biology student to Phil rather than Ian because it was Ian's first year and he did not want him to have "too much on his plate."

He made a point of meeting the advisers when they first visited the school. He told me that they knew what their job was and so that first meeting was just to welcome them, tell them that he would be happy to see them if their schedules permitted, and to direct them to the sponsor teachers' classrooms. As he took one adviser to Dan's room they talked about him and Allan said, "Dan is a great teacher."

Summary

Rumours about St. David's did circulate in the city of Morwick. However, Allan received many telephone calls and had many interviews with prospective parents that indicated that the school had a good reputation. He kept the pipeline open to Catholic parishes, was keen to make use of the local media, and was warm and welcoming towards visitors. Finally when he could, he let people know that St. David's had good teachers.

Chapter 5

SUNLIGHT ON THE WEB

Schools have their own complicated web of constituencies (Blumberg, & Greenfield, 1986) which may be held tightly together by a strong mutual belief (Peshkin, 1986) or more tenuously by a few commonly-held core values (Spindler, 1979). Principals have to bind these groups together into an entity which has coherence, identity, and meaning. Their overarching vision, varied methods of communication, and many acts water these delicate seeds and enable the school to develop. In this conclusion I will start by comparing Allan's own efforts to tie everyone together with studies of other principals and more general literature about school heads. I will then examine how Allan dealt with tension that occurred and finish with reflections on his leadership style and the lessons for other administrators and some practical implications of this study for courses in educational administration and future research.

ADMINISTRATIVE TIES

To Students

Headmaster Tom McGraw's aim was to control the students' time, thought, movement, and relationships (Peshkin, 1986). Therefore they could put on the armour of God, withstand the assaults of Satan, and rout the force of evil. His own relationship with the student body was guided by these principles as they were subjected to close scrutiny and discipline born out of love. Peshkin (1986) wrote that the prevailing feeling towards students was that "as tender shoots, easily bent towards the world's ways their school must be no place for skeptics, no market for the sifting and winnowing of ideas, no garden in which a thousand flowers may bloom" (p. 113).

At Bishop McGregor School religion was not such a pervasive influence. To Geoffrey Goddard, the headmaster, religious especially Catholic messages were used to bolster Catholic

community norms and to promote the sort of qualities he wanted students to develop. He gave them reasons why certain practices were not allowed and let them know about the sanctions. Schooling was seen by him as a preparation for life and ultimate accountability to God and he "wanted a school which was clean and tidy and where well mannered students worked hard" (Burgess, 1983, p. 48).

The educational philosophy of St. David's was laid out in the student handbook. It stated:

> The educational efforts (spiritual, intellectual, emotional, physical) of St. David's aim to prepare students to become faithful Christian witnesses to a lifestyle of sincere commitment to God, Church, family, neighbour, and self. In response to the challenge of an impersonal materialistic world, we strive to form a community based on wholehearted caring and mutual respect. Personal growth takes place in the context of relationships in a community.

For Allan this preparation involved giving students a grounding in what it meant to be a practising Catholic so they had a set of beliefs that they could live by if they chose to. He said to me, "It's not a question of imposing something on someone, the idea is to say you are in a community here that really cares about you." So Religion classes were the place where their thoughts could be shared and various ideas could be examined. As well as this they were to be taught how to be industrious, punctual, flexible, challenging, and creative so that they could become active and responsible members of the wider society.

Allan presented himself to the students each day and showed that here was a person they could talk to, who might poke fun at them but who could take a joke in return, who would be encouraging but who would let them know if they stepped out of line. In his calm, quiet, and positive way he made them aware of his expectations that they should abide by the rules, start to take responsibility for their community, and accept challenges.

Penny Foster mentioned to me that the students realized Allan would listen to them and made use of it. She added later in the interview that the students were very happy at St. David's which reflected back on Allan's administration. This was consistent with Kate Ingram's comments:

> I've never seen him angry. He always has a kind word for anybody that comes in. You know when he's in the halls he talks to the kids, he's interested in what's going on, and he relates to them on their own level which I think is very important. I think that's a direct result of a happy, contented school.

Phil Sergeant's view was that he tried to keep the students' spirit up and said, "One of the things the kids do catch is that Allan is very seldom negative." Perhaps the last word here should belong to Gerry Knight, the only student who asked me directly what I was doing at the school. When I replied that I was shadowing the principal for my thesis he said, "He's a good guy."

To Teachers

Bethany Baptist Academy's teachers were already "steeped in absolutist traditions" (Peshkin, 1986, p. 136) and the belief in their particular calling was very firm. They were expected to supervise all student activities closely and were often given explicit directives and instructions about how to carry out their academic and religious roles. They were expected to work conscientiously and to be obedient and loyal to the administrators. In return they would be listened to and supported.

Many teachers out of the large staff at Bishop McGregor's School were not practising Catholics. Geoffrey Goddard tried therefore to set them an example to follow and built a framework that they could operate within. All the things he asked teachers to carry out he was prepared to do himself. Also even though he knew he could not count on their complete support "he did put before them a series of suggestions to link religion, life, and work in the school" (Burgess, 1983, p. 37). Although all members of staff were responsible for maintaining discipline and standards he established a division of labour. House staff were to concentrate on things like attendance, dress, and manners while department staff were to specialize in standards of work and noise levels.

Although not all the St. David's staff were Catholics Allan thought that the school had a Christian atmosphere and said that most candidates for teaching positions did not offer themselves unless they had close ties with Church. Given the small number of staff and a fair measure of conformity regarding Christian values Allan was able to convey the importance of teaching without much

difficulty. Buetow (1988) recommended that principals in Catholic schools should "foster a climate of trust" among the staff and Allan's own feeling was that he should not interfere with the teacher and student relationship. No explicit directives or instructions were handed down as at Bethany Baptist Academy and as Allan told me:

> My own philosophy of education is that it has to be based on trust and confidence in others...Yes you expect them to do the best job that they can, but at the same time you've also got to say to them, "I have a lot of trust in you. I have confidence in your ability and occasionally I'm going to need to talk to you about how things are going."

Whether it was the 8.15 prayer meeting, the faculty room during the lunch break, or in his office at the end of the school day, Allan was ready to talk, listen, swap stories, and pat staff on the back. In measured tones and without fanfare he tried to sell teachers his version of what being a professional meant. In his dealings with individuals, small groups, or the whole staff he worked carefully to strengthen his relationship with them. He also encouraged professional development to help them, as he said, "To become the best teachers [they could] possibly imagine."

Both Phil Sergeant and Kate Ingram were happy to have things left in their hands. Kate was pleased that "he wants us to control what goes on in our classrooms; he wants us to take it and go with it." Phil was also appreciative of Allan's support when it came to innovative teaching methods or community-based projects. However, Kate had reservations about his policy of non-interference and said, "If he has a weakness it's ensuring quality control with inexperienced teachers, and I would like to see him following up and going into their classrooms."

Alison Peters referred to Allan's role as a listener. She commented:

> We never get the impression that he's dishonest. We don't get the impression that he's listening but not taking into account what we are saying . . . I always feel he is working and taking it in, not that he is necessarily going to do anything with it, but at least he is taking it into account.

Teachers at St. David's did work conscientiously, were not content to rest on their laurels, and their outlook was positive.

Penny Foster attributed the "happy family" atmosphere in the school to Allan's leadership. She pointed out that "even when, like right now, the teachers are supposed to be working to rule, you see them still hanging around perhaps doing the odd thing when they are actually supposed to be gone home."

To Parents

The relationship between the schools and the parents involves the students as a medium of exchange. So, if the schools do not pay attention to the needs of the parental community then the school will suffer from declining enrolment and funding (Mellor & Hayden, 1981, p. 55). Mellor and Hayden (1981), noting that this applied more to Catholic and other private schools, examined the communication between a Catholic Girl's School in Melbourne and its parental group. The school principal was aware of the importance of this link and she fostered this by scheduling individual appointments, being at parent-teacher meetings, writing a weekly newsletter, and helping two parental support groups. The information flowed mainly from the school to the parents and this was also the case at Bethany Baptist Academy, Bishop McGregor School, and St. David's.

Parents of Bethany Baptist Academy pupils were reminded of their role as Christian school parents when signing the "Pledge of Acceptance," at parent-teacher fellowship meetings, and in the end of year letter. This communication left them in no doubt that their cooperation and support for the school's God-given task was expected and required. Tom McGraw recognized that parents held the primary responsibility for their children's education but saw "no place for parents in determining the nature and operation of their children's Christian school" (Peshkin, 1986, p. 96). Parents effectively had to pay their money, take what they got, or withdraw their child. This is in marked contrast to Rose's (1988) study of the charismatic Covenant School where "teachers and parents [were] much more involved in developing their own curriculum" (p. 9).

Geoffrey Goddard's dealings with the parents of Bishop McGregor School students at a range of formal and informal meetings gave him a chance to tell them how the school worked for

them and their children. He defined its tripartite identity as its Catholicism, its house system, and its individualized curriculum. By his scheme all the constituent groups should work together to encourage the students to become Christian adults and lead a fulfilled life and this message was reinforced in correspondence with parents (Burgess, 1983).

Allan tried to bind the parents to St. David's in similar ways. The school's character was confirmed by statements in the Introduction to the Diocesan Catholic Schools, in the newsletter, and with comments and prayers in parental meetings. The segment in the Introduction to the Diocesan Catholic Schools about St. David's philosophy, for example, stated:

> All our educational efforts, be they on the spiritual, intellectual, emotional, or physical levels, aim to prepare the student to become a Christian witness to a lifestyle which demands self-discipline, self-sacrifice, and above all, self-knowledge.

The flow of information, about the school choirs' concerts, the decision to have an evening awards' ceremony, or the Diocesan Youth Conference, was sustained in an effort to keep parents up to date. When passing on information, thanks, or when calming their concerns, Allan made them aware that their role was important and that they were a valuable part of the school community. With these efforts he also hoped to increase the core group of really active and involved parents and keep it vibrant.

However, one difference in the relationship between administrators and parents centred around this more active parental role. The Covenant School experience of greater parental involvement was a straightforward cultural byproduct (Rose, 1988). Allan's own feeling that parents should play a more active role merged with provincial recommendations and a Catholic emphasis (Buetow, 1988, p. 225) on "sharing," "community," and "partnership" with parents, and this precipitated action. He thought that the provincial changes would be drastic and he wrote in his newspaper article that it was important for teachers, students, and parents to be aware of what would occur. To raise parental awareness he made parents a significant group in his Educational Planning Team in the hope that they would later explain the changes to other parents and become actively involved

in curriculum development. He told me, "That is something entirely new for them, entirely new; I think it is exciting, interesting, and really challenging for them and to me and the staff." The feedback he received after the first meeting indicated that the parents present were enthusiastic about his plan.

According to Penny Foster, increased student enrolment at St. David's was an indication that Allan was doing a good job and keeping parents happy. I saw nothing during my fieldwork to give me a different view of this relationship. One parent who came to tell Allan that she was withdrawing her children because of changing family circumstances ended by saying, "John and Tina are very happy to have you as principal." Allan smiled and replied that he was beginning to understand what was going on. Dave Hill's father said something along the same lines when he told Allan that he was sorry Dave was leaving as St. David's was very positive for him.

To Board Members

Administrators are appointed by boards because they exemplify certain values that the board want to be infused and sustained at the school (Grant, 1981). A principal for Covenant School was found after the Covenant fellowship prayed for the Holy Spirit to send them a man to start a school. Although Hilda, the eventual principal, was not a man, they all sensed that she was the choice of the Holy Spirit.

Once appointed, administrators in denominational private schools are vested with wide-ranging powers and considerable responsibility. A unity of purpose surrounding Calvinist education and an assumption that the principal knew what was best for the school made direct supervision by a board unnecessary (Van Brummelen, 1986). At Lakehaven Baptist Academy, Rose (1988) found that "the principal is clearly the one who runs the school...for example, [he], without consulting anyone, agreed on the spot to my doing a study of his school" (p. 117). However, Praetz (1980) described the situation in Australian Catholic schools as one of "controlled autonomy" (p. 150). While the principal had considerable freedom of action within the school the process of recruitment, the prolonged in-service training, and the fixed term

appointments acted as a check.

The relationship between the principal and the board may be an uneasy one for even though administrators are handed substantial control they are still responsible to the board or governing body. As Kraushaar (1972) put it, "the seeds of misunderstanding, lack of communication, and meddling are always present in institutions controlled de jure by a board which must of necessity delegate most of its powers to appointed administrators who are accountable to the board" (p. 197).

Allan inherited a situation where Kraushaar's (1972) seeds had germinated and so he informed the board at the first meeting that they should not bypass the administration if they wanted to talk to teachers and they should let him know when they visited the school. His attitude was that they "appointed a principal and paid him a salary; he's there to run the school for you and you don't have to be in here every two to three days to check on what the hell he's doing." He wanted a situation where he could share school business with them once a month unless something urgent cropped up.

With a new board chairperson and treasurer though the friction between autonomy and accountability became quite evident. Allan knew that they were conscientious volunteers and committed to the school's Catholic purpose. He also recognized:

> From what I can gather they have a great deal of confidence in what Bruce and I are doing. They see the school growing. Some new things have happened and everybody's happy with it.

However, he felt that he had been given a clear mandate and did not want anyone looking over his shoulder. He knew that he should assist the school board by providing them with advice and information but stressed:

> I'm not going to inform Maggie every time we get a teacher sick and have to have a substitute. I mean what does she want? I don't blame her, I think she's very sincere and enthusiastic but this is the way it's coming across. I'm just going to have to sit down with her one day and tell her, "I don't think your role is that," and I think she will buy it.

He also became defensive when he thought that he was

receiving undeserved criticism from board members. When Bernie Montgomery telephoned Allan about the budget breakdown Allan told him that the bibles had been paid for with money from the fundraising efforts of the Parent's Auxiliary Group. As their conversation progressed and Allan raised his voice a little Sue Whitfield quietly shut the office door. Allan ended by saying that he would not run off to Hawaii with the funds and that this was a different method of accounting and they were just getting used to it.

To Parishes and the Community at Large

There is often a direct link between a denominational private school and the local church or group of churches. As Peshkin (1986) and Rose (1988) have found the establishment of the school may actually occur when the pastor or head elder becomes disillusioned with the public school system. The particular religion emanating from the church provides coherence and meaning (Rose, 1988) and demands commitment and encounter (Geertz, 1973). Furthermore the church has educational obligations because of people's spiritual nature and because education itself is a moral undertaking. In this context the school has its historical and philosophical tradition.

In the schools that Peshkin (1986) and Rose (1988) investigated the bonding between the school and the church was very strong and in the former study the school was "a ministry of Bethany Baptist Church" (p. 48). Pastor William Muller and Tom McGraw, for example, had the same outlook on life and while the former was "the uncontested doctrinal authority for the world of Bethany" the latter was "a trusted spokesman for fundamentalist Christianity and for Christian education" (Peshkin, 1986, p. 48). Cooperation was therefore close and communication was frequent.

Bishop McGregor School and St. David's were enveloped by a Catholic milieu but that environment was neither as close nor as compact as that around Bethany Baptist Academy. Rather than serving one church Bishop McGregor was linked to Catholic parishes in the south-west of Merston while St. David's was the only Catholic high school in the city of Morwick and surrounding area. In both cases the local parish priest was the chaplain at the school

and taught in the religious education department. Certainly the relationship between Allan and Father Pat was genial but their conversations centred on Father Pat's current teaching experiences.

The tie between the school and the parishes of the region did cause Allan some concern especially when the rumour mill got going. His answer was to continue the practice of speaking at church services, to institute a report for the parishes about St. David's, and to use the local newspaper. Visitors to the school, be they the health nurse or the student teachers' supervisors, were given a warm welcome by him.

Rumours that the teachers were communists did circulate but judging by the telephone calls and meetings that Allan had with prospective parents St. David's reputation as a good school was intact. Friar Ewan, a Director of Religious Education from another province, was asked to prepare a review of the religious education programme at St. David's. In his presentation he said that there was "a security of life" and "a sense of vision" at the school, the students were proud of it, and that reflected the efforts of the principal. His written report made the same points and afterwards Allan told me, "I was really pleased with Ewan's comments as I think we're really trying."

To The Administrative Team

The administrators and their assistants work closely as a team patching up a relationship here, reminding someone over there how the game should be played, and keeping a close watch on how everything is operating. Goodwin's (1968) conclusion was that the school's management team has to share responsibilities based on the strengths and weaknesses of the people concerned. In this context the principal has to define the role of the vice principal and "work to unite all personnel for a common purpose" (Buetow, 1988, p. 261).

Allan's strategy here was to knit the team together by maintaining a warmth between them, reminiscing about the war stories, and involving them in policy decisions. With the team knit together well they could carry out their tasks to smooth the way for the all-important teacher and student relationship.

Conspiratorial nods, grins, and signals, quick and humorous exchanges, and shared thoughts and emotions behind closed doors were signs of the friendship between Allan and Bruce. Soon after Allan started working at St. David's he invited Bruce and his wife to his house for dinner and this invitation was reciprocated and repeated. Allan mentioned to me that he knew he had to work on Bruce's relationship with the staff. However, he added that things were improving since Bruce would telephone him soon after he had blown his top at somebody or something and apologise for any embarrassment he had caused him. Alison Peters certainly thought things had improved as she stated to me:

> Allan has to carry Bruce and protect him to a certain extent . . . I had a problem with him and I went to Allan and said "I will not have this man speak to me like that, it's unprofessional." Allan said that he would deal with it and he did. He went and talked to him and I see the metamorphosis in the last two or three months as there's a real cohesiveness now. Bruce went from being very anti-teacher, which he was and will readily admit to, to being very pro-teacher . . . so that's made Allan's job a whole lot easier.

Penny and Sue were relaxed in his presence. They smiled, laughed, and listened. Sue felt comfortable enough to come and shake his sweet tin, and Allan often consulted them on matters like student absences from school. When discussing something in Allan's office Penny might lean with her hand on his desk, take telephone calls, and carry on a three way conversation.

Summary

Many publications about the role of the principal refer to the necessity of binding the various constituencies to a certain set of values. Grant (1981) asserted that school leaders should evoke a shared commitment to the values of the school community. Guerra, Donahue, and Benson (1990) wrote about a strong principal providing a vision that weaves students, teachers, and parents together into a community. Kraushaar (1972) argued that everything depended on the personal and professional qualities of the principal and their "ability to establish a relationship of mutual trust and respect with the constituencies within and outside of the school" (p. 176).

Allan provided expectations for each of the groups at St. David's. He provided many examples of Christian behaviour for students to follow and urged them to take more responsibility. He encouraged teachers to be professionals, he promoted parental involvement in school life, and he made it clear that he wanted the board to let him get on with the task in question. He fashioned a close administrative team to run the school and allow the teachers to attend to the students' education without interruption. Lastly he tried to give the Catholic community outside the school a clear picture of what was going on, hoping to create a good impression and minimize rumours.

WEAVING THE GROUPS TOGETHER

A spider not only constructs radial threads which converge in the centre but also weaves sticky spiral cross threads to make that web more effective. By comparison Allan worked to demonstrate to individuals and groups that other individuals and groups were doing a valuable job, or were not as bad as they thought, or that they too were working for the good of the school. He slowly and painstakingly wove these cross threads to make a stronger school and he paid particular attention to the threads that tied the students and the teachers and the teachers and the board together. The latter thread had broken before with negative consequences for the whole web and was still in a new and fragile state.

Students and Teachers

During the first assembly of the educational year Allan reminded the students of the solemn duty of care entrusted to the teachers as they stood in a semi-circle before the altar at the Commencement Service. Since all the teachers were present at the assembly it was an exercise in gentle reinforcement for them; a reminder of the basic creed of their profession. Allan's introductory remarks in the yearbooks and the day to day message he gave to the house groups over the intercom tied teachers to students and students to teachers with small almost invisible threads. He also entwined the two groups by inviting teachers to

reach out to, buoy up, and talk to certain students or by asking teachers to help students with their ideas and projects. Thus Louise Turner began to help Jody Carr with her plan to make a film of the school. If a thread between a student and a teacher frayed Allan moved to repair it and make it last. Therefore he tried to diffuse Shiela Baynes' anger at being sent to the office and make her see that Mrs. Alexander had a very good reason for her action. He suggested that her apology should be sincere and emphasized the necessity of healing rifts by telling her the story of how he and Don Smith picked up the pieces after they squared off over Don's training shoes.

Board Members and Teachers

Bridging threads were also used by Allan to link the staff and board members, ease the tension of their tenuous relationship, and engineer some trust. With board members Allan's point was that the staff were not in it for their own selfish ends but were prepared to accept board policies, particularly the policy concerning new budgetary procedures. When Father Leyton expressed a wish that there should be evening classes for adults Allan told him and the rest of the board that this had also been raised by the teachers. Later he remarked to me that his inference was that their thinking was not that far apart. He then said that he and Bruce would study it and report back. At the next staff meeting he broached the idea and told them that he felt that Father Leyton's idea was to enhance the school's reputation with the outside community.

Another time he told the staff about the board's offer to supply interested faculty members with computers at a discounted price. Here he said, his message was that the board was not out "to screw them" and were trying to help them and it was repeated later on to individuals when they expressed misgivings about board criticism of his action. When an invitation to the professional development day was sent to the board and Maggie accepted on their behalf Allan took the opportunity to reinforce this delicate but important thread. In his opening statement of the day he said that he was glad that the invitation had been sent out to the board and that Maggie could attend the function.

Parents and Teachers

Parents heard Allan speak in very positive terms about the staff's concern for the pupils, their competency, and their innovative efforts. In one instance Allan revealed to the Parents' Auxiliary Group that he had stressed the excellence of the teachers when lobbying for St. David's to be used for student teacher practicums. The newsletter also contained the same theme in excerpts explaining why professional development days occurred and what students and their teachers had been doing together prior to the Christmas holidays. Staff members were prompted to be professional and tactful in their dealings with parents. Both they and the board were told that it was important and right to have parents more involved in deliberations about the provincial educational changes and in school operations.

Community and School

Allan discussed the necessity of promoting the school in a positive way for the outside community with certain individuals from the constituent groups. He talked with Maggie, and on a separate occasion with Bruce, about the consequences of bad publicity on enrolment figures. Dan was shown the advertisement in the Catholic Herald and they chatted about making a bigger splash when parents of grade seven students would be thinking about the years ahead. Also in the context of school-community relations the board was informed about how he and Bruce were getting on with the Parish Report.

Visitors to the school, like the student teachers, who entered the world of St. David's for a short time, were made welcome and treated with warmth and respect. In the formality of the staff meeting Allan told them that everyone was there to help them. Informally by the lockers he told some students in Dave Vasseur's class that he was a good teacher who knew his subject. He noted later to me that Dave had "achieved a good rapport with the class" and illustrated this with an amusing story that we both laughed at. Dave had remarked to his class that an inspector would be coming in to examine his teaching. One student then asked him how they could help and another suggested that they should review the

previous chapter so that they would seem sharp!

Summary

In his words and actions Allan tried to bind groups together so that the school could flourish as an institution. He knew that this task was just as important as having strong links with each constituency. One weak link may render the chain inoperable and a frosty relationship between two groups in a school may damage that school's organizational culture.

STAYING INTACT

A web is designed to stay intact despite internal and external tension. In the school context this tension may occur with competing (Khleif, 1971), adversarial (Newton, 1981), and self-interested groups (Krefting & Frost, 1985), or with a loss of meaning and heart (Deal, 1990). Plude's (1974) historical examination of Catholic schools and Sykes' (1990) reflections on teaching and transcendent ideals have shed more light on friction between groups in denominational private schools. Originally Catholic schools could be supported by an immigrant Catholic population because of the very low salaries paid to the teachers from religious orders. However, with the growth in the number of lay teachers being hired friction increased (Plude, 1974). While denominational schools are often financially strapped and try to reduce costs (Sykes, 1990), "lay teachers do not live in a convent with the parish paying a percentage of their living expenses; [they need]` a living wage (Plude, 1974, p. 25.)

At St. David's relations between the teachers and the board had been strained in the recent past and the teachers had grouped together and gained a contract. Allan told me in September, "There is a better atmosphere here for things to be worked out on a more friendly basis" but in retrospect the bond was still fragile. Compromise and negotiation rather than fellowship and communion was still the essence of the relationship between the two sides (Newton, 1981) and so this portion of the web had weaknesses. During the teachers' action Bruce pointed to something of this when he told Allan that the teachers viewed their relationship

with the board from an employee-employer perspective.

On 'Black Wednesday' the strands between the teachers and the board fractured with the advent of their 'work to contract' after prolonged negotiations. At 8.15 that morning Allan and Paul went to the staffroom only to find a locked door. During the first period Allan spoke to Pete Munro, one of the teacher negotiators, about their action. He stated that he was concerned about the teachers' image if this got out. What would parishes, feeder schools, parents, and students think of it? He asked him to reconsider the action although he did say that he understood their point of view. Pete said that he knew Allan was caught in the middle but the negotiations had dragged on too long and they felt the board was not acting in good faith.

When Pete had gone Allan talked it over with Bruce and in a tense voice exclaimed, "After all we've done to boost the school's image this should happen!" Bruce agreed with him and added that what the teachers did not recognize was that the board were volunteers. Speaking on the telephone later to Father Pat about the message coming out of this dispute Allan said, "It's like cutting your nose to spite your face . . . you know pressure has to be put on them to tell them that they've made the wrong decisions."

Working to Control the Damage

Despite his frustration Allan worked to control the damage so that the school's web was not torn anymore. On the first day of the teachers' job action he told Sue that parents who telephoned the school were to be told only that the situation was to be discussed at an in-camera session of the board that evening. After that meeting Allan told me that it was decided a letter should be sent to the parents giving the details and stressing that the disruption would be minimal. He went on to tell me:

> We do not want the situation to escalate. We want things things left right where they are. Right now it's a minimal thing. Yeah there's a little bit of concern but not much. It's not even worth getting upset about . . . You have to give the process of negotiation time to work . . . The teachers don't want to be really disruptive right now.

Dealing With Anxious Groups

At a particularly well-attended Parents' Auxiliary Meeting a week later Allan provided an account of what was going on. Here he stressed that the teachers' 'work to contract' was not meant to interrupt their children's education, he was neutral in this dispute, and he did not want rumours and misinformation to circulate. He then let them know what he had told the students. At the normal time for notices over the intercom system he said that he had explained what action the teachers were taking and that this would cause a minimum of disruption to their school day. The school council had called an extraordinary meeting to discuss the situation and a letter they would write to underline their apprehension. Allan told the parents that his recommendation to them had been to type the letter and present it to both sides. With a question about using parental supervision to keep the library open at lunchtime he admitted it was a possibility but said that he would prefer to wait to let negotiations run a bit longer.

He did not tell them how he dealt with Blair Horn when he was reported to him for proclaiming loudly that the "Commie" teachers were in the wrong. When Blair came to the office Allan let him state his argument, told him about the teachers case and said that while they both might have some concerns about it the actual disturbance to the school routine was negligible.

According to Allan he and Bruce were asked at the board meetings what their feelings were since they had to live with it. Although privately he had expressed his great frustration to Catherine Delaney he said to me that he had told the board, "Look it's not that disruptive, it's just some extra supervision." He also said that he had advised them to keep the process of negotiation going.

Summary

On two occasions I heard comments made about Allan's ability to stop the tear in the web spreading. A week after the action began, Father Pat, who was not a member of the teachers' group, was talking to Allan and mentioned, "The only thing I've heard from the teachers is that you're doing an incredible job of

holding things together." Kate Ingram was also complimentary when she told me:

> With this labour thing that's going on at the moment, this working to contract, he is caught between a rock and a hard place because he is neither for the board and against the staff nor for the staff and against the board. So he is walking a very fine middle line but he does it very well. He has made it clear to us that he really hopes that we can settle this without an escalation.

ALLAN'S LEADERSHIP STYLE

As I spent more time at St. David's watching Allan trying to weld the groups to the school's culture through his expectations and actions I became more aware of his own leadership style. He did not stride the corridors giving charismatic addresses worthy of 'King Harry' so that his troops would storm the battlements. Under his watchful eye the school did not tick with the initial precision of 'Modern Times' complete with division of labour, quality control, and the pressure of time. Nor was he his own 'Prince' suavely playing off one group against another to achieve his ends of school unity and power consolidation. Nor yet was he imprisoned in his own office sentenced to deal with the suffocating weight of information, requests, questions, complaints, changes while waiting for the next crisis.

He was willing to lead the cheers, saw schooling as preparation for the world of work, was keen to do things his way, and often complained about the bits of paper he had to shuffle. However his was a different style; more of a quiet, sustaining voice of care, calm, and counsel. His method was to bind the school web together in a quiet yet controlled and confident way. Walking around the school, often humming to himself, he might joke with the rowers selling pizza slices at lunchtime, compliment a teacher on her new dress or matching sweater, and have a quick, almost conspiratorial chat with Bruce. He took the time to listen to and reassure parents so that the bonding could be tighter and in an unobtrusive manner provided information to the wider community. Sensitivity invaded his confidence when faced with board criticism he felt to be unjust but his fuse was slow, reason soon prevailed, and he continued his mission to weave, sew, and spin.

That quiet, sustaining voice was choked when the fraying thread between the teachers and the board finally broke. In a sense everything was back to square one as much that Allan had worked for had been dashed to the ground. His vision of responsibility, professionalism, involvement, and mutual understanding to strengthen the Christian community had become blurred, replaced by the very numbing sensation that St David's cultural walls could come tumbling down. The metaphor for his administration had become the reactive balancing act (Spindler, 1979) to ensure organizational survival. He had to keep the school running despite the potentially destructive tension that surfaced and had to appear neutral in the dispute between the teachers and the board. Yet, again Allan dressed his wound and started the rebuilding process; trying to stop the tear from spreading and redoubling his efforts to be an example for the quieter and dignified way.

Example of Care, Calm, and Counsel

His leadership style has lessons for todays administrators to contemplate and reflect on. Care goes beyond watchful regard, solicitude, and attention. It is grounded in principle rather than in preference, consensus, or rationality (Hodgkinson, 1991). As such it is entwined with the concept of service. White (1986) has written about the connection between spiritual qualities and excellence in leadership and has provided the biblical example of Nehemiah to illustrate this. He thought service was a feature of Nehemiah's leadership and noted that "the true leader serves...and in so doing will not always be popular [and] may not always impress" (1986, p. 88). It approaches love in its selflessness, patience, humility, and understanding. Noddings (1988) linked the ethic of caring to a concern for relationships and since many schools are made up of groups with differing cultural agendas positive interaction steeped in care is crucial. The principal is a key figure and example in this organization and exercise of a genuine care for individuals and groups can provide a powerful norm for social relations. The establishment of this value in the school's organizational culture may serve to counter distrust, self interest, and apathy. Without it glittering prizes may still be won

but the spirit of the institution may decay.

This part of Allan's personality was certainly appreciated at St. David's. Kate Ingram said to me that she applauded his straightforwardness, his honesty, and his care even though he could be rather slow to react in certain situations. Alison Smythe, a grade twelve student, told him in front of me that she valued his concern and friendliness. Father Ewan alluded to the importance of care at St. Davids' in his report,

> I wish to repeat that all the people I have met have a great faith in St. David's. It is a Catholic school that has a sense of dedication, warmth, and hope due in no small part to its principal and religion teachers.

The administrator's work in school may be described as a constant barrage of questions, concerns, suggestions, and complaints from every quarter. Indeed, Kraushaar (1972) argued that the style of leadership in American private schools included balancing conflicting interests and Kleinfeld (1979) wrote that the head of the school tried to achieve a balance between the groups. Once an equilibrium has been established and the fever of life has been stabilized a sense of calm may be fostered and maintained by the principal. Phil Sergeant had worked in a few state schools and noted the calmer atmosphere at St. David's,

> The school is very calm compared to most schools I've seen. For example, you could compare it to the atmosphere of Toxteth Valley High School. You could blindfold me and put me in the halls and I could tell you what school I was in. Allan is quiet in school and the school is quiet.

In this tranquil environment contemplation may take root unhindered by the outbursts of emotionalism and administration can move away from Wolcott's (1979) exercise in firefighting . Through this reflection educational theory may be used to instruct practice (Sergiovanni, 1987) and special interest agendas and political fashions may be thoroughly evaluated.

With the metaphor of the principal as a guide (Kraushaar, 1972) calmness is an essential attribute. I saw Allan erupt on one occasion but even then apologies were soon exchanged and the air was cleared. Later he used the story to explain to another student, Shiela Niven, that she too should make a sincere apology for her

bad behaviour. He strove to keep everything calm when the relationship between the teachers and the board soured. Blair Horn was told that extra help for students was not a clause in the teacher's contract and that while he, too, had concerns about the teachers' action it did not really disrupt the school day. Parents were also informed that the disruption was minimal at a Parent Auxiliary Group meeting. Kate Ingram, certainly, felt that Allan's calmness was an example consistent with the school's organizational culture in her comments,

> I've never seen the man angry, like I've never seen him blow up. To me he's the model of what this school stands for and that is Christian principles. You know there is another way to deal with this. There is a way that you can deal with it in the sense of, "I don't have to explode all over the place."

While the principal "inspires in the school community a vision of what it can become" (Buetow, 1988, p. 259) he or she must listen to, learn from, and counsel its members. The administrator as head of the family must come to know their members "with insight if not with intimacy" (Hodgkinson, 1991, p. 61) and this means paying careful attention to them. Indeed, for Sergiovanni (1987) this is essential for those principals who wish to be effective. At St. David's Penny Foster talked about Allan's style and concluded, "Everyone feels a little more calm and a lot more confident with someone who can sit and listen and come up with a quiet manner and advice for them."

The practice of this art may lead the principal towards a state of sympathy or empathy. With the improved understanding and deepened relationship members of the community may be drawn more tightly into the school's web. When Natalie Jones poured out her story of harassment by other grade twelve students one afternoon Allan listened without interrupting or pressing her for details. When she finished he asked some questions in a gentle way and began to explore some possible solutions with her. Dan Fisher also referred to this ability of Allan's when he commented:

> I like the idea that he's neither excitable nor erratic and it's not that he's just not passionate. He's just not a temperamental sort of fellow. He's a pretty even-tempered guy and is consistent that way.

Example of Trust in Others

Trust that the actions of others will be professional, responsible, and in keeping with organizational values is a highly desirable state but the journey towards it is arduous and, often, soul destroying for the administrator. This trust implies a faith in others and represents a dive into uncharted waters. Alison Peters told me that indeed Allan's expectations for new teachers was "I trust you, you were hired, you must be doing a good job" and this she reckoned meant that he had faith in their professional integrity. The sense of feeling trusted is a motivating experience that increases self-esteem, consciousness, and the sense of belonging. With trust teaching becomes agreeable (Lieberman & Miller, 1990) but without it people feel useless (White, 1986). It is the bond of a powerful and deep relationship but it is fragile and needs continuous attention.

Delegation may be a feature of that journey towards trust and may even be a sign of it. Phil Sergeant saw this facet of Allan's leadership in the way he let Bruce conduct the Remembrance Day Ceremony. He said,

> Another principal may always feel obliged to be in the driver's seat. He's willing to hand the wheel over to someone who drives the road better. That is a style choice and it is a good one. I don't know if I would do the same.

With the various school groups and personalities the relationship of trust may be at different stages. Some may not be familiar with the way things operate, others might reject certain articles of faith, while a few might feel a sense of community. So the administrator starts all over again here, builds a stronger link there, and delegates a task over there to fashion this web of significance (Geertz, 1976). Trust is not usually built overnight and often takes months or years to develop. Slowly that trust may be earned if people show the principal that they are responsible and accountable.

Problem of Laissez-Faire

In his dealings with the teachers Allan was always ready to reinforce something positive, but he often said to me that he did not want to be constantly reminding them to do this or to refrain from that. However, in leaving teachers to get on with things the danger is that the concept of accountability suffers. Alison Peters' colourful comment was that "he puts the ball in your court and never plays" and Sue Ingram felt that younger teachers might have benefitted from more contact and more direction Richard Carter's anecdote also addressed this theme,

> I think his expectation on the part of the staff is professionalism. Now we had a situation last year where there was a person on staff who was very unprofessional. Ah, God is in Heaven and that person was taken away from us. Unfortunately, again, I think that maybe with that weakness of tolerance or indecision, not much happened there. It's okay when you have those expectations of people who generally conduct themselves in a professional manner. It is a problem when you have someone who doesn't.

Perhaps for some people Allan's expectations were misunderstood or ignored and for others more guidance was needed so they could approach accountability with confidence. It is possible that his quiet, painstaking, and personal efforts to weave threads between groups and bind them to the school's culture were too quiet and too subtle. The message for administrators may be that expectations should be repeated in a variety of ways and never seen as self evident. Accountability, itself, need not be oppressive, dictatorial, nor lead to resentment (Coleman & LaRocque, 1989). With sensitive handling it may be regarded as a reflection of the reality that each educational constituent has a different role to play in achieving a common purpose.

With faith or trust one can throw away the crutches and walk. However reaching that point may take a long time and making that initial step into the unknown may prove impossible for many. Knowledge that someone has faith in you and your actions is a wonderful feeling but equally it is very reassuring to know that someone will be there to pick up the pieces if you make a mistake. Support is welcomed and appreciated as a sign of effective school leadership (Blase, 1987; Buetow, 1988); Radomsky, 1980-1) and

may help to strengthen individuals so that they can develop as professionals and eventually be able to soar.

Interpretations of Support

In his attempts to build a closer working relationship with the various school groups and improve morale Allan showed himself to be supportive in that he was accessible, he listened to people's concerns, gave them a pat on the back, and was open to suggestions. This was certainly referred to as one of his strengths in the interviews, surveys, and more informal talks that I conducted. He provided a more indirect support by trying to remove some of the understandable the barriers between the factions. Sue Ingram noticed this and welcomed it,

> Now one thing I can really emphatically say about Allan is that he is the biggest protector of the staff, even with this labour thing going on at the moment . . . That's a difficult position to put anybody in. He's also the biggest booster of his staff and you know a lot of people don't understand that but he really is. Anytime you have that combination in a principal I think you've really done well.

However, support can also be regarded as action to help teachers when faced with student misdemeanour. According to studies on teachers, effective principals dealt with disciplinary referrals in a timely manner and backed the teachers up publicly (Blase, 1987; Lieberman & Miller, 1990). Allan wanted teachers to have quality time with their students and was certainly prepared to act if they had "a kid in class who [was] a real jerk and who [was] constantly, completely disrupting class so [they] couldn't teach." The steps outlined in the red school handbook were followed when breaches of discipline occurred but Allan's wish was for teachers to try and handle the situation themselves before calling in the administrators. Some teachers found this a problem and Sue Ingram's comments to me were:

> If Allan has a weakness it is that he doesn't deal with things quickly and confront people directly, right away, when it happens. He doesn't do what you would expect to be done and that leaves a lingering feeling with the faculty.

Richard Carter spoke of the problem Beth Kanawa faced with the choir class and made the same criticisms,

> It has just been a horror show for her and really, well it was into last week before anything concrete happened. She got more suggestions and support from the teachers who were there after school than she did from either administrator.

Summary

Allan might have been slow to react but the answer to the argument between laissez faire and intervention is not simple. Knowing what to do in each situation is difficult for any administrator and the key may be flexibility guided by experience and established procedures. Criticisms can certainly be levelled at Allan's administrative style as they can be voiced about anyone's techniques. What is more important, though, is that his style has much to offer the aspiring and the experienced educational leader. In what became a very challenging term for him his ethic of care, his calm approach, and his ability to listen provide an excellent administrative lesson in values.

ACADEMIC SUGGESTIONS

"Few jobs call on the same person to be a friendly colleague, the judge, and, if need be the executioner also; but this is all in the day's work of most school heads" (Kraushaar, 1972, p. 188). With Kraushaar's (1972) observation about this very demanding vocation in mind I will conclude by looking at some possible implications for educational administration programmes and directions for future research. It is naive to assume that all people who take these courses are honourable or have honourable intentions (Hodgkinson, 1991) and therefore suggestions are necessary. Indeed, those drawn to administration may be careerists, politicians, technicians, or poets (Hodgkinson, 1983).

Possible Additions to Courses

A course in educational administration is most useful when the theory and the experience covered in it challenges the potential practitioners of the art. They should be encouraged to be reflective, to search for what is right, and to act accordingly. Without this frame of mind the expert knowledge gained and the techniques learned to manage time, conflict, and budgets become meaningless and mechanical. The idea of knowing oneself, one of Hodgkinson's (1991) four megamaxims, is essential to this process because of the social context of an organization like a school. Knowing oneself means that the individual mission is clearer and so the task of imparting values and converting others becomes a little easier. Courses should therefore invite the individual to look inwards and dig deep to mine underlying beliefs to determine if this highly moral occupation is suited to them. Then they should be helped to weigh up their strengths and weaknesses so that they can improve the latter and become well-rounded administrators.

Allan certainly believed in his vocation. He told me that he applied to become principal of St. David's because he wanted to use his Christian morality and experience "for the benefit of others, the staff, the kids, the parents, and so on." He talked about what he thought the students in grade twelve should be taking with them,

> Hopefully we have given them something that they can take away from here; something that they can build on. That's my feeling. We don't do the whole job. We give them a basic structure and value system and say to them, "this is what it is. We've taught you about this and this is what it means to be Catholic . . . This is what your faith means. Now it is up to you what you follow."

The structure he gave them and the other school groups was his Christian example; his care, sense of calm, and willingness to listen.

Finally a regard for organizational culture should be fostered in aspiring administrators. This will help them to know the type of situation and followship (Hodgkinson, 1991) they will face. A newly appointed principal might have the experience of this type of school, may understand the teachers' perspective, and may

remember his or her schooldays. However, they may have little experience with other constituencies like parents, board members, or community. Here, as Blase (1987) argued, courses might address issues like communication, team development, and group dynamics. They might also grapple with the words and actions that really bind teams, groups, and constituencies together; concepts like faith, care, trust and happiness. This would help to tighten that web of significance (Geertz, 1975) so that people do feel they belong to something special (Sergiovanni, 1984b).

Potential Avenues for Research

Religion is the cornerstone of civilization and religious belief is at the apex of Hodgkinson's (1983) value hierarchy. In a world of skepticism and cynicism there is a danger that profound religious senses, like wonder, love, and joy, may be lost to us. These senses may be replaced by a world-weariness as the words are dismissed and diluted and our preoccupation with self-interest grows. Education is, indeed, special for present and future generations (Hodgkinson, 1991) and philosophy and religion are being allowed to drift aimlessly in many educational organizations (Bloom, 1987; Hodgkinson, 1983). Therefore research, paving the way for the metaphysical reconstruction of these senses in schools (Schumacher, 1973), is long overdue. The principal plays a vital role in the organizational culture of the school (Blumberg & Greenfield, 1986; Buetow, 1988; Kelly, 1990; Kraushaar, 1972) and so research about the provision of religious leadership is crucial. Certainly, studies of denominational schools and the principals who guide them will not contain all the answers. However, they profess to have a distinctly religious culture and, as such, may provide researchers with important insights.

There is room for surveys to be designed to test hypotheses about denominational schools using independent and dependent variables. Questionnaires dealing with the perceptions of various school groups could also be sent out and then analyzed. Denominational schools and the leadership of them could also be explored and examined critically to expose their philosophical roots and initiate reflection and renewal. Finally interpretive studies of these schools could be undertaken to build on the work

of Peshkin (1986) and Rose (1988). There is room as well for more detailed descriptions of particular principals, like Allan Greenlees, for they weave the strands together.

Last Words

I am not sure whether Allan ever thought of himself in terms of a spider but in his quiet, determined, and positive way he spun and wove. He sought to construct and repair relationships, inform the various factions about what he felt they should be doing, and to bind them to the Catholic principles that St. Davids' espoused.

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